

LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY, 1870.



A SPRING DAY.

STUDIES IN THE FIELD OF 'VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ.'

IT is to be regretted that we have no English equivalent for the term *vers de société*. The impression which the French title conveys is in nine cases out of ten an erroneous one. People are apt to suppose such verses to be simply pretty jingles for fashionable circles, like pages of the 'Book of Etiquette' turned into rhyme.

It appears to me that 'society' in this connection is not society as opposed to the million, but society as opposed to solitude. Such 'society-verse,' then, as we are here considering belongs to social everyday life, and is written by, and written for,

men of the world. It is rather the elegant and polished treatment of some topic of interest than the lofty and removed contemplation of some extensive theme. Isaac Disraeli says: 'These productions are more the effusions of taste than genius, and it is not sufficient that the writer is inspired by the Muse; he must also suffer his concise page to be polished by the hand of the Graces.' In other words, the author of *vers de société* needs not necessarily to be a poet. Indeed, we may go so far as to say that not all poets can write *vers de société*.

There is, in truth, as much diffi-

culty in finding a good definition of this style of verse as there is in finding it an English name. Disraeli, who, in his 'Miscellanies,' has some interesting observations on *vers de société*, seems to give too much prominence to the 'society' as 'elegant society.' A reviewer in the 'Times,' some of whose remarks will be quoted anon, appears to fall into the same error. Mr. Walter Thornbury strikes the same false note in his preface to 'Two Centuries of Song.' He goes even further, perhaps; for he speaks of such verses as album verses!

It is to Mr. Frederick Locker, one of the most facile of modern writers of *vers de société*, that we must turn for the best definition of the style, in which he so excels. In his preface to the 'Lyra Elegantiarum'—to which let me hasten to acknowledge how much I am indebted in this paper—Mr. Locker says *vers de société* needs by no means to be confined to topics of artificial life. 'Subjects of the most exalted and of the most trivial character may be treated with equal success, provided the manner of their treatment is in accordance with the following characteristics, which the editor ventures to submit as expressive of his own ideas on the subject. In his judgment, genuine *vers de société* and *vers d'occasion* should be short, elegant, refined, and fanciful, not seldom distinguished by chastened sentiment, and often playful. The tone should not be pitched high, it should be idiomatic, and rather in the conversational key; the rhythm should be crisp and sparkling, and the rhyme frequent and never forced; while the entire poem should be marked by tasteful moderation, high finish, and completeness; for however trivial the subject-matter may be—indeed, rather in proportion to its triviality—subordination to the rules of composition and perfection of execution should be strictly enforced.'

Mr. Locker illustrates his definition by giving examples of pieces which, though they bear a certain generic resemblance to *vers de société*, yet, from the absence or from the excess of some of the qualities

enumerated, are excluded from his selection. He then adds that 'the poem may be tintured with a well-bred philosophy, it may be gay and gallant, it may be playfully malicious or tenderly ironical, it may display lively banter, and it may be satirically facetious—it may even, considering it merely as a work of art, be pagan in its philosophy or trifling in its tone, but it must never be ponderous or commonplace.'

The two qualities, finally, which Mr. Locker considers absolutely essential are 'brevity and buoyancy.' If I may be allowed to add another essential, we shall have, I think, 'the three b's' of this school of verse, to pair off with Lord Palmerston's famous 'three r's' of education. To my thinking, 'brevity, buoyancy, and brilliancy' constitute the essence of this species of poetry.

It is one of the incidental characteristics of such verse that the writer talks familiarly in *propria persona* with his public, 'delinates himself,' as Disraeli says, 'and reflects his tastes, his desires, his humours, his amours, and even his defects.' The 'Times' reviewer, alluded to above, gives the reason of another characteristic—the light-some tone of the writers of *vers de société*. 'Theirs,' he says, 'is the poetry of bitter-sweet, of sentiment that breaks into humour, and of solemn thought, which, lest it should be too solemn, plunges into laughter. . . . When society becomes refined, it begins to dread the exhibition of strong feeling, no matter whether real or simulated.

. . . In such an atmosphere emotion takes refuge in jest, and passion hides itself in scepticism of passion.

. . . In the poets who represent this social mood there is a delicious piquancy, and the way they play bo-peep with their feelings makes them a class by themselves.'

To search for a parallel in another style, we must take, I think, the Essay as used by Steele, by Addison, by Goldsmith, by Lamb, and by Thackeray. It is the prose, as the other is the verse of the world—in the better sense of the word as meaning human life. There is some-

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thing nearly allied to the peculiar frame of mind needed in the writer of *vers de société*, in the mood of the essayist, who, like Thackeray, laughs over some things because he does not want you to notice that he is crying. It is the fashion to describe this manly shame for the display of the tender emotions as Cynicism. If the nickname be justly applied (and it is but rarely that nicknames are justly applied), I am afraid we shall have to admit that when we have concentrated the very essence of *vers de société*, it will have to come under some of those mysterious chemical formulas of C O and H, with a preponderance of power in the symbol representing the acid society pleases to call Cynicism.

The truth is the writer of *vers de société* may as well at once adopt the hackneyed motto—seldom correctly quoted by the way—*Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto*. He is not singing at the top of Parnassus to an audience too far below him to be seen. He is singing by the wayside, by the fireside—in the 'gilded saloon,' if you choose, and not from the dais, but an ordinary drawing-room chair. He can no more think of assuming the airs of a poet than he would of going to an evening party in a laurel-wreath. He must sing like a man, with the natural shrinking of a man from the exposure of his tenderness, his grief, his love, his folly to the eyes of his neighbours.

Such a man's poetry is essentially human. There is little of what the old poets called 'the divine *afflatus*' about it. It is a bright spark struck out, in passing, from some flint in the hard road of every-day life by the rapid hoof of Pegasus, rather than the glow which attends the forging of his shoes under the superintendence of Apollo and the nine Muses.

There being so much human nature in this species of poetry, it is almost useless to attempt to give the date of its birth. Mr. Thornbury thinks that we owe it to the French, and that it was introduced by those exiles who returned with Charles from Breda. Now, al-

though it be true that courtier-poets of the Waller type especially studied 'the mere coloured subtleties of fancy marquetrie,' the Elizabethan poets and their predecessors found time for lighter tasks than 'toiling at the forges of thought,' and there is no very strong reason for drawing the frontier-line of *vers de société* at 1660. Not to mention Lydgate's 'London Lyckpenny,' Dunbar's 'Discretion in Giving and Taking,' we have admirable examples of *vers de société* in Skelton's 'Merry Margaret,'* and in several pieces written by the unfortunate Earl of Surrey. Raleigh, Marlowe, Sylvester, Wotton, Donne, Jonson, and our great Shakespeare himself, have all contributed to our treasury of such poetry. In 'My flocks feed not,' and in 'Under the Greenwood Tree,' Shakespeare offers us models for this class of composition. Though they have not all succeeded, most of our great poets have at some time or another essayed this style. Even the gravest

* As one of the earliest instances of this kind of verse, I quote it:—

'TO MISTRESS MARGARET HUSSEY.']

'Merry Margaret,
As Midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon,
Or hawk of the tower;
With solace and gladness;
Much mirth and no madness,
All good and no badness,
So joyously,
So merrily,
So womanly,
Her demeaning
In everything,
Far, far passing,
That I can indite,
Or suffice to write
Of merry Margaret,
As Midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon,
Or hawk of the tower;
As patient and still,
And as full of good will,
As fair Isidell,
Colander,
Sweet Pomander,
Good Cassander;
Steadfast of thought,
Well-made, well-wrought,
Far may be sought,
Ere you can find
So courteous, so kind,
As merry Margaret,
This Midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower.'

of them have acted on the maxim, '*Non semper arcum tendit Apollo*;' and Milton, besides some Horatian adaptations which would fairly come under this head, fulfilled all the requirements of *vers de société* in his lines written 'when the assault was intended to the city.'²

The quotation I have just made reminds me that the origin of *vers de société* dates from times long antecedent, not only to the Restoration, but to the existence of the French nation, to whom Mr. Thornbury considers we owe the school. In the illustrious company of writers of *vers de société*, one of the highest places of honour must be reserved for Horace.

Horace is really the father of *vers de société* so far as we know its history. Anacreon is the only other claimant that we can recognise; but his claims are barred by the narrowness of the 'society' for which he wrote. Even as rendered with a modern disguise by Moore, he lacks the catholicity of human interest which makes Horace the pocket-companion of so many.

Take that well-known ode 'Integer Vitæ' for an example, and you will see at once that, *mutatis mutandis*, that is to say, altering the local colour of a few allusions—it is as true to the humanity of to-day as to that of the Augustan epoch:

* Cowper, in his *vers de société*, flings off his grave melancholy most noticeably, and can make even his serious philosophy smile; witness the last verses of 'The Jackdaw':—

'He sees that this great roundabout,
The world, with all his motley 'rout,
Church, army, physic, law,
Its custom and its businesses,
Is no concern at all of his,
And says—what says he?—Caw!

'Thrice happy bird! I too have seen
Much of the vanities of men,
And, sick of having seen 'em,
Would cheerfully these limbs resign
For such a pair of wings as thine,
And such a head between 'em.'

In 'The Colubriad' he is even more more sprightly. The last couplet is very comic.

'With outstretched hoe I slew him at the door,
And taught him never to come there no more.'

'Integer vitæ, scelerisque parus,
Non eget Mauris jaculis, neque arcu,
Nec venenatis gravida sagittis,
Fusce, pharetra:
Sive per Syrtis iter astuosas,
Sive facturus per inhospitalem
Caucasum, vel quæ loca fabulosus
Lambit Hydaspes.

'Namque me silvâ lupus in Sabina,
Dum meum canto Lagena, et ultra
Terminus curis vagor expeditis,
Fugit inermem.
Quale portentum neque militaris
Dantius latè alit ascoletis,
Nec Juba tellus generat, leonum
Arida nutrix.

'Pone me, pigris ubi nulla campis
Arbor æstivâ recreatur aurâ;
Quod latus mundi nebulae malusque
Jupiter arguet:
Pone sub curru nimium propinqui
Solis, in terrâ domibus negatâ;
Dulce riscentem Lalagen amabo,
Dulce loquentem.'

I venture to give rather a modern paraphrase than a translation of this exquisite Ode, because, with all its faults, I trust the version will show that the sentiment, nay, even the allusions, with some modification, belong not to Horace's age but to all the time which society may claim:—

'Dear Brown, the man with conscience pure,
Who never bubble-schemes promoted,
Needs no six-shooter to secure
His peace—an armament too bloated!—
Whether for autumn's trip a yacht
He should on stormy seas commission,
Or spend it in Italian grot—
Prey to the bandits of tradition.

'For I, who, chanting Lily's name,
Was wandering round my house in Surrey,
By chance beyond my meadows came
On Jobson's bull—in such a flurry!
A fiercer beast ne'er Smithfield knew,
Nor Spanish matador bestraddled,
There's naught so savage in the Zoo,
But—hearing me—the bull skedaddled!

'So, place me on the polar heights,
Where not a tree the landscape varies;
Where northern lights, and month-long nights,
Fling the poor traveller in quandaries;
Or place me in the torrid zone,
Where Phœbus' heat is simply br'iling.
I still will Lily sing—my own,
So softly speaking, sweetly smiling.'

This is but a rude attempt to convey the *badinage* of the original. A better example is afforded by Thackeray's rendering of 'Persicos Odi,' but I selected this Ode to



STUDIES FROM LIFE AT THE COURT OF ST. JAMES'S.
THE QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS.

Drawn by the late George H. Thomas. Engraved by William L. Thomas.

THE HISTORY OF THE



OF THE
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NEW-YORK
FROM
THE
FIRST
SETTLEMENT
TO
THE
PRESENT
TIME
BY
J. C. COOPER
ESQ.
OF
NEW-YORK
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I
NEW-YORK
PUBLISHED BY
J. C. COOPER
AT THE
STORE OF
J. C. COOPER
NO. 101 NASSAU ST.
1852

prove that the allusions, so plentiful in this instance, are always commutable. Thackeray's version is perfect:—

'TO HIS SERVING BOY.'

'Perfidos odi,
Puer, apparatus;
Displicent nexæ:
Fulvâ coronæ:
Mille sectari,
Moxa quo locorum
Sera maremur.

'Simplici myrto
Nihil allaboræ
Sedulus curæ:
Neque te ministrum
Dedecet myrtos,
Neque me sub arcâ
Vite libentem.'

'AD MINISTRAM.'

'Dear Lucy, you know what my wish is,—
I hate all your Frenchified fuss:
Your silly entrées and made dishes
Were never intended for us.
No footman in lace and in ruffles
Need dangle behind my arm-chair;
And never mind seeking for truffles,
Although they be ever so rare.

'But a plain leg of mutton, my Lucy,
I prythee get ready at three:
Have it smoking, and tender, and juicy,
And what better meat can there be?
And when it has feasted the master,
'Twill amply suffice for the maid;
Meanwhile I will smoke my canaster,
And tiddle my ale in the shade.'

Dating from Horace's time, the muster-roll of writers of *vers de société* has been a long and brilliant one, numbering many a famous name from among the most distinguished of every country.

In that brilliant assemblage, besides those I have already spoken of, will be present the laurelled shades of Herrick,* Suckling, Sedley,

* It may not be out of place to give a characteristic bit of the rollicking divine's writing. Were it not so well known, 'The Night Piece to Julia' should appear here. But this is very neat.

'TO HIS MISTRESS OBJECTING TO HIS NEITHER TOYING NOR TALKING.'

'You say I love not, 'cause I do not play
Still with your curls, and kiss the time away.
You blame me, too, because I can't devise
Some sport, to please those babies in your eyes;
By Love's religion, I must here confess it,
The most I love when I the least express it.

Oldys, Spenser, Cowley, Congreve, Swift, Prior, Gray, Goldsmith,* and many others. Nor will there be a lack of lords among the wits; for Rochester, Buckingham, Dorset, and, as I have already said, Surrey (to mention only a few nobles), all of them earned laurel chaplets, as well as inherited gold coronets.

Among our modern poets, Colman, Moore, the brothers Smith, Haynes Bayly, Thomas Hood, Barham, Leigh Hunt, Aytoun, Praed, and Thackeray at once suggest

Some griefs find tongues; full casks are ever
found:

To give, if any, yet but little sound.
Deep waters noiseless are; but this we know,
That chiding streams betray small depths
below.

So when Love speechless is, he doth express
A depth in love, and that depth bottomless.
Now since my love is tongueless, know me
such,

Who speak but little, 'cause I love so much.'

ROBERT HERRICK.

* We give an example of Goldsmith's neatest essay in this style, the whole of which (though a few lines are common quotations) is not familiar.

'AN ELEGY ON THE GLORY OF HER SEX,

'MRS. MARY BLAIZE.

'Good people all, with one accord,
Lament for Madame Blaize,
Who never wanted a good word—
From those who spoke her praise.

'The needy seldom pass'd her door,
And always found her kind;
She freely lent to all the poor—
Who left a pledge behind.

'She strove the neighbourhood to please,
With manners wondrous winning;
And never follow'd wicked ways—
Unless she was a-sinning.

'At church in silks and satins new,
With hoop of monstrous size;
She never slumber'd in her pew—
But when she shut her eyes.

'Her love was sought, I do aver,
By twenty beaux or more;
The king himself has follow'd her—
When she has walked before.

'But now her wealth and fiery fled,
Her hangers-on cut short all;
Her doctors found when she was dead—
Her last disorder mortal.

'Let us lament, in sorrow sore,
For Kent Street well may say;
That had she liv'd a twelvemonth more—
She had not died to-day.'

themselves as writers of *vers de société* of the highest order. My list, however, must be considered as far from exhaustive. But what a store of gems the mention of these names recalls! What could be more delightful than the tender humour of Thackeray's 'Cane-bottomed Chair'? 'The Ballad of Bouillabaisse' and 'The Pen and the Album' are perfect. Could anything be better than 'The Age of Wisdom' or 'Sorrows of Werther'?

'THE AGE OF WISDOM.

'Ho, pretty page, with the dimpled chin,
That never has known the barber's shear,
All your wish is woman to win,
This is the way that boys begin—
Wait till you come to forty year,

'Curly gold locks cover foolish brains,
Billing and cooing is all your cheer;
Sighing and singing of midnight strains,
Under Bonnybell's window panes—
Wait till you come to forty year!

'Forty times over let Michaelmas pass,
Grizzling hair the brain doth clear—
Then you know a boy is an ass,
Then you know the worth of a lass,
Once you have come to forty year,

'Pledge me round, I bid ye declare,
All good fellows whose beards are grey,
Did not the fairest of the fair
Common grow and wearisome ere
Ever a month was past away?

'The reddest lips that ever have kissed,
The brightest eyes that ever have shone,
May pray and whisper, and we not list,
Or look away, and never be missed,
Ere yet ever a month is gone.

'Gillian's dead, God rest her bier,
How I loved her twenty years since!
Marian's married, but I sit here,
Alone and merry at forty year,
Dipping my nose in the Gascon wine.'

'SORROWS OF WERTHER.

'Werther had a love for Charlotte
Such as words could never utter;
Would you know how first he met her
She was cutting bread and butter.

'Charlotte was a married lady,
And a moral man was Werther,
And, for all the wealth of India,
Would do nothing for to hurt her.

'So he sighed and pined and ogled,
And his passion boiled and bubbled,
Till he blew his silly brains out,
And no more was by it troubled.

'Charlotte, having seen his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread and butter.'

It would appear that the utmost length recognised for *vers de société* is about a hundred lines. Præd, whose influence over English *vers de société* is all-powerful, will be found very particular on this point. His longest pieces seldom contain more than thirteen of those eight-line verses, which many of our modern writers seem to think the only form for society-verses. But for the limit of length, thus authoritatively laid down, I should be inclined to rule that no collection of *vers de société* is complete without Thackeray's 'King of Brentford's Testament.' No such collection is complete without Leigh Hunt's exquisite 'Rondeau,'* against which length, at any rate, cannot be urged as a reason for exclusion:—

'Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief! who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in.
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have misled me;
Say I'm growing old, but add—
Jenny kissed me!

Not far from this must rank Shelley's 'Love's Philosophy':

'The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

'See, the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother:

* The 'Rondeau' is a form especially adapted for such elegant versification as that under consideration. Mr. Charles Kent has written one which may well take its place here:—

'Round her slender waist a garland,
Woven in frolic, Lillian wound;
Sweet blush-rose and sweeter jasmine
In the coil alternate bound.
Sauntering 'midst the blooming thickets,
Trained for timorous love's retreat,
With the calm blue heavens above us,
And the green grass at our feet,—
Better thus, said I, the garland
O'er my Lillian's brow be placed,
While a loving arm creeps fondly
Round her slender waist.'

And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea—
What are all these kissings worth
If thou kiss not me?

Barham's best *vers de société* will be found in 'My Letter,' 'The Poplar,' and some lines written at Hook's. But the following is not a bad brief example:—

'What Horace says is
Eheu fugaces
Anni labuntur, Postume, Postume!
Years glide away, and are lost to me—lost to me!
Now when the folks in the dance sport their merry toes,
Taglioni and Kislens, Duvernays and Ceritos,
Sighing, I murmured, "Oh mihi pretiarior!"'

In running over any collection of our *vers de société*, the reader will observe that Horace supplies the text and much of the matter of many pieces, a fact which will lend support, if support be needed, to the claim I have put forward on his behalf as the classical ancestor of the school.

Before noticing our living writers of *vers de société*, it will be well to speak of Praed, who, as I have observed, has exerted a remarkable influence over them. His masterpiece is, I am inclined to think, 'The Vicar,' in which, under all the surface of badinage and sly satire, there lie a gentle philosophy and a touching pathos. What can be more delicate than these stanzas?—

'And he was kind, and loved to sit
In the low hut or garish cottage,
And praise the farmer's homely wit,
And share the widow's homelier pottage.
At his approach complaint grew mild,
And when his hand unbarred the shutter,
The clammy lips of fever smiled
The welcome which they could not utter.

'Sit in the Vicar's seat: you'll hear
The doctrine of a gentle Johnian,
Whose hand is white, whose tone is clear,
Whose phrase is very Ciceroian.
Where is the old man laid? Look down,
And construe on the slab before you,
"Hic jacet Gulielmus Brown,
Vir nulli non demandus lauru."

* The generality of readers I find too often carelessly miss the delicate elegance of the construction '*nulli non demandus*,' and render it 'here lies one who was never crowned with laurel,' instead of 'who deserved almost all conceivable

In Praed we find an instance of the rule that the writer of *vers de société* is not necessarily a poet. It seems hard to deny to him a name which he so nearly earns, but which he never really attains. He is a butterfly among the bards, as all must be who devote themselves entirely to the fascinating art wherein 'brevity, buoyancy, and brilliancy' are the chief requisites.

Of the living school of writers of *vers de société*, Mr. Locker must be admitted to hold a place in the foremost rank. He is, indeed, a master of the art, and endowed by nature with the wit, fancy, and feeling without which a mere knowledge of the method would be a *caput mortuum*. Here is an example of his tender mood:—

'A WISH.

'To the south of the church, and beneath yonder yew,
A pair of child-lovers I've seen;
More than once were they there, and the years
Of the two
When added might number thirteen.
'They sat on the grave that has never a stone
The name of the dead to determine;
It was Life paying Death a brief visit—alone
A notable text for a sermon.
'They tenderly prattled; what was it they
Said?
The turf on that hillock was new;
Dear little ones, did you know aught of the
Dead,
Or could he be heedful of you?
'I wish to believe—and believe it I must—
Her father beneath them was laid:
I wish to believe—I will take it on trust—
That father knew all that they said.
'My own, you are five, very nearly the age
Of that poor little fatherless child;
And some day a true lover your heart will en-
gage
When on earth I my last may have smiled.
'Then visit my grave like a good little lam,
Where'er it may happen to be;
And if any daisies shall peer through the
grass,
Be sure they are kisses from me.'

Of his more playful mood, 'Cir-

laurels.' The following translation has only one merit, that of preserving the original metre and rhyme for non-Latinists—

'Where you are lying, William Brown,
What laurels should not gather o'er you!

circumstance' is an admirable example.

Mr. C. S. Calverley is another who has distinguished himself in this class of composition, as has Mr. Mortimer Collins, whose 'Summer is sweet' is an exquisite poem. Mr. Godfrey Turner's 'Temple Fountain' would be enough, had he never written anything else of the sort, to win him a place in the record. Mr. Henry S. Leigh has also, in a short space of time, achieved a well-deserved reputation. The publication of his 'Carols of Cockayne' establishes that reputation, and adds a welcome volume to the collection of the amateurs of *vers de société*. I know of few neater lines than the sixth of the second stanza of the following poem:—

'WISDOM AND WATER.

Fields are green in the early light,
When Morning treads on the skirts of Night:
Fields are gray when the sun's gone west,
Like a clerk from the City in search of rest.
"Flesh," they tell us, "is only grass;"
And that is the reason it comes to pass
That mortals change in a life's long day
From the young and green to the old and gray.

'Not long since—as it seems to me—
I was as youthful as youth could be:
Cramming my noddle, as young folks do,
With a thousand things more nice than true.
Now this noddle of mine looks strange,
With its plenty of silver—and no small
change!
Surely I came the swiftest way
From the young and green to the old and gray.

'Though the day be a changeful thing
In winter and summer, autumn and spring;
Days in December and days in June
Both seem finished a deal too soon.
Twilight shadows come closing in,
And the calmest, placidest hours begin:
The closing scenes of the piece we play
From the young and green to the old and gray.'

The preference of the present age to the Golden Age is ingeniously expressed in the next extract, and is an unexpected and novel turn:—

'THE TWO AGES.

'Folks were happy as days were long
In the old Arcadian times;
When life seemed only a dance and song
In the sweetest of all sweet times.
Our world grows bigger, and, stage by stage,
As the pitiless years have rolled,
We've quite forgotten the Golden Age,
And come to the Age of Gold.'

'Time went by in a sheepish way'
Upon Thesealy's plains of yore.
In the nineteenth century lambs at play,
Mean mutton, and nothing more.
Our swains at present are far too sage
To live as one lived of old:
So they couple the crook of the Golden Age
With a hook in the Age of Gold.

'From Corydon's reed the mountains round
Heard news of his latest flame;
And Tityrus made the woods resound
With echoes of Daphne's name.
They kindly left us a lasting gauge
Of their musical art, we're told;
And the Pandean pipe of the Golden Age
Brings mirth to the Age of Gold.

'Dwellers in huts and in marble halls—
From shepherdess up to queen—
Cared little for bonnets, and less for shawls,
And nothing for crinoline.
But now simplicity's set the rage,
And it's funny to think how cold
The dress they wore in the Golden Age
Would seem in the Age of Gold.

'Electric telegraphs, printing, gas,
Tobacco, balloons, and steam,
Are little events that have come to pass
Since the days of that old régime.
And, spite of Lemprière's dazzling page,
I'd give—though it might seem bold—
A hundred years of the Golden Age
For a year of the Age of Gold.'

One very important characteristic of Mr. Leigh's *verses* is the frequency and accuracy of his rhyming. In his definition of *vers de société*, Mr. Locker insists that the rhyme should be 'frequent and never forced,' and urges it because, 'however trivial the subject-matter may be—indeed, rather in proportion to its triviality—subordination to the rules of composition and perfection of execution should be strictly enforced.'

It would be a happy day for English literature if this law were but enforced. In these times of innumerable periodicals, when every man thinks himself a poet who can write four more or less halting lines with only two 'rhymes' among them—and those rhymes more often cockney rhymes than not—it becomes a matter of vital importance that those who have the interest of literature at heart should fight a good fight for purity. In comic verse, and especially in burlesque, we are constantly meeting with 'rhymes' that grate on a sensitive ear like a discord in music. We are told that they are good enough

for comic verse—in proportion to the triviality, of which, however, 'perfection of execution should be strictly enforced.' Perfection is absolute, and he who, instead of striving for it, is content to write slipshod verse, must also be content to rank with the negro melodist who fancies he has a correct couplet in

'Tapioca, tapioca,
Hit him in the eye with a crowbar'

We have little poetry in the present day, but the art of writing *vers de société* is widely cultivated. It would be well if all those who have influence in the matter would insist upon 'subordination to the rules of composition and perfection of execution'—a law laid down by one of the masters of the art.

Before concluding this paper on *vers de société*, it may be as well, after having said all I have to say in its praise, to explain where I fear it has injured literature.

With a multiplication of channels for publication, and with large reductions in the cost of bringing out books, the increased production of volumes of so-called 'Poems' by everybody from A to Z has become alarming, especially when on good authority we learn that the present age is to be credited with less real poetry than any of its predecessors. I fear that every young gentleman who has chanced to write a good copy of *vers de société*—by which I mean 'good' as judged by the audience to whom it was submitted—has somehow fallen into the error that it therefore behoves him to publish a volume of 'Poems.' And what renders this infiction more sad is that the majority of people are satisfied that all verse is poetry, without having the most rudimen-

tary knowledge of the rules of verse, or the faintest appreciation of the genius of poetry. In the interest of poetry I venture to appeal to the only people who can stamp out this disorder—the critics of the press. Having not sufficient time carefully to weigh the merits of every claimant for the bays, they prefer, in the kindness of their hearts, to 'let down easily,' and thus it is that their 'favourable notices' are appended by the dozen to every volume of doggerel that can find a publisher. If they would but reflect that—supposing those notices to be of any real value—we have, according to their account, more true poets in this age (so singularly destitute of poetic genius) than in any preceding time, they would, I think, see the justice—to all concerned—of 'letting down easily' by absolute silence. This may be a transgression beyond the limits of my subject; but as it was suggested by that subject, and I honestly believe points to a very serious question, I trust it may be pardoned.

This paper would not be complete without some mention of the American writers who excel in *vers de société*. Dr. Wendell Holmes is pronounced by Mr. Locker to be perhaps the best living writer of this species of verse. Willis must also have a place in the roll, and so must John Godfrey Saxe and Lowell. When I have mentioned these, I feel I have omitted other names that should be recorded; and, glancing back, I see that I have not named Morris or Prout, Lover or Laman Blanchard, Macaulay or Barry Cornwall. I trust, however, that I have given an indicative sketch of the history and nature of *vers de société*.

TOM HOOD.



MY FIRST BRIEF.

A Tale of Quarter Sessions.

I HAD at last been called to the bar. I had duly ate my way to the profession, sincerely hoping that the profession would give me something to eat. I had paid the fees, which came heavy for one of my slender patrimony, also fees for legal tuition, which came heavier still. I had rooms in Foolscap Court, Temple—not rooms such as lots of fellows have, which are perfect Oriental divans for luxury, but set up in the clouds, not large, not lofty, not well furnished, not well lined with books. To say the truth, my income was of that defective kind on which even the stern genius of British taxation looks with leniency, and allows us to make a deduction before those hateful coppers in the pound are ruthlessly exacted by Mr. Lowe. I had thought of going circuit, and in that case I should have selected the 'Home, sweet Home,' on account of the nearer contiguity to London, and the consequent saving of expense. I found that even this was beyond my reach at present, and that I had better take to it gradually, trying on a single assize town or so at first, and thus picking my way. At first I had gone to the criminal courts, on one account because criminal law was more dramatic and fuller of human interest than civil law, and, on another account, because the law was much easier. But I tired. There is a monotonous vulgarity in crime; one blackguard is very much like another blackguard. Then I betook myself to the back benches of the Westminster courts, where I consumed a good deal of foolscap paper by pen-and-ink profiles of the judge and leaders. There was a whole row of us, and we sat like bashful maidens waiting to see to whom those sultans of solicitors would throw the handkerchief. But although it would be in the highest degree derogatory to the honour of the profession to make the slightest overt advance towards a solicitor, yet those of us who had any interest

put the screw on very tightly, in order to get any briefs. But, alas! I was destitute of any professional interest. I had a schoolfellow a solicitor, but he himself was making spasmodic efforts to win his way. Still I was a counsel learned in the law, and I might have the satisfaction of contemplating the sapient wig which covered but could not conceal my own flowing locks. It was said of Alexander that he gave his captains all that he had, but reserved hope for himself. I had nothing to give away, but, also, I had nothing but hope.

But a chronic state of hope is rather a hopeless and depressing business. I had the sense to know that idleness at least gave me leisure, and that leisure is all that the most successful can look forward to as the prize of their career. I turned my leisure to account, partly by haunting the courts, perhaps partly by haunting other places as well. I began also to read at the British Museum, and even to attempt leader-writing and reviews, and to tread that literary downward path which leads to professional perdition. But I was saved from this untoward fate by my maternal uncle Blogg. Uncle Blogg came and knocked me up one fine morning. I was then a mere sucking infant at the bar—had not been called two years. For the latter years of my history Uncle Blogg and I had seen very little of each other. I was his dead sister's child, but in that state of comparative impecuniosity which rendered it extremely possible that I might appeal to him for financial assistance. Any such procedure would be extremely abhorrent to the mind of Blogg. Uncle Blogg did not like me—did not believe in me—did not think I should ever get called to the bar—did not think I should ever get on if I were called. This, of course, sounds very unnatural, but if you have not met the counterpart of such conduct among your own flesh and blood, I can

only say that you must have an extremely limited acquaintance with the uncle species of the human family.

It is such a happiness to be able to speak with perfect candour about one's relations. Uncle Blogg was cold-blooded, money-loving, selfish to a degree. He was narrow, and ignorant, and pudding-headed. But he had his good points. He would have been simply a fiend if he had not. He could put a very good dinner on his table, and would give you as good a bottle of wine after it as you could find anywhere in the country. He was hospitable also. You may say that this is a contradiction to what I have just now said of him; I can only reply that, as a matter of fact, we meet with such contradictions in human life. Uncle Blogg called upon me, as I speedily discovered, because he had need of legal advice. He had great objections to that sort of legal advice for which a bill might be tendered. He had had such a bill once, I am ready to admit, of enormous dimensions, and was resolved, if possible, that he never would have another. He wanted law, and he thought that from his nephew he might get it cheap. And I? Well, he was my uncle, and I owned that tender tie. I also remembered that he was a childless widower and a man of many acres.

'Well, Nephew Morton,' said he, with a conventional shake of the hand, 'and how are you? Going to be the new judge?' There was at this time a very regrettable vacancy on the judicial bench.

'Well, hardly, Uncle Blogg,' I said. 'We must first creep, and then go. I mustn't expect to be a judge until I have been another dozen years at the bar.'

'Well, they might do something quicker for a clever fellow like you. Lots of business, I suppose—eh?'

How I should have liked to have told my Uncle Blogg that up to that time I had not had a single brief! I should have liked a bit of sympathy. But I had a better chance of sympathy from the hearth-rug than from Uncle Blogg. The only chance I could have of obtain-

ing his money was to make him firmly believe that I should never stand in need of it.

'Well, sir,' I said, with a sort of equivocation, 'we youngsters at the law mustn't complain. I am not dissatisfied.'

'I'll be bound not,' said Uncle Blogg. 'My sister's son is sure to have lots of brains.' With all my family pride I had hardly thought that Blogg and brains went much together. And then he came upon me with a very direct pounce of a question. 'Do you know anything about the criminal law?'

I ventured modestly to reply, 'A good deal, I believe.'

'I'll be bound you do,' said Uncle Blogg. 'Attend the Central Criminal Court, eh? eh?'

This was his favourite method of interrogation.

'Well, uncle,' I said, 'I used to do so, but latterly I have quite given up the Old Bailey and confine myself to the Westminster courts.'

'Pay better—eh? eh?' said Blogg.

I modestly admitted that there was certainly more money to be made at Westminster than at the Old Bailey.

'Still you wouldn't mind, once in a way, taking a brief in a small criminal case to oblige a near and dear relation—eh? eh?'

'A brief!' Blessed words! And to think that my first chance of a first brief was to proceed from unsympathising Uncle Blogg!

'Well,' I said, diplomatically, 'I dare say I shouldn't. But I should like to hear all about it. What's the nature of the case, uncle?'

'It's only a sessions case, Nephew Morton.'

My countenance certainly fell.

'Ah! I see you're rather above that sort of thing. But many of our best lawyers have got into a great deal of business by attending sessions—eh? eh?'

'Yes, uncle; but in those days there was a great deal more business done at the sessions than is now the case. Still, uncle, anything to oblige you. I'm your man.'

'Well, it's a troublesome sort of business, all along of Miss Trafford.'

Now I had heard of Miss Trafford, who was my uncle's Indian ward, but with the eyes of the flesh I had never been allowed to behold her. She had been committed to his care, and Uncle Blogg had been supposed to have made rather a good thing out of the allowance from her estate; and it was even whispered that he was quite willing, being a widower, to take both his ward and her estate together.

But I have been thus parenthetically interrupting my uncle's explanation about Miss Trafford. He went on, as follows: 'Her lady's-maid has been taken up for shop-lifting at Seacombe.' Now Seacombe was the greatest town of that part of the country. 'There's no doubt but the jade stole the lace handkerchief; but Mary Trafford has taken it into her head that she didn't, and I have been obliged to do whatever she wanted me to do. No end of trouble. I've had to stand bail, and now I have got to get her defended at the sessions, and they come off next week.'

'I suppose this girl, the prisoner, or defendant, rather, the lady's-maid, is no longer at your house.'

'Oh, isn't she, though, and I bail for her, too! I keep her pretty sharp under my own eye, and my servants are on the watch if she should show any signs of bolting. If I had let her leave, I should have lost my hundred pound bail to a certainty. And there is another thing I want to ask you, Nephew Morton—what's the cheapest way of a man changing his name?'

And was my uncle going to change his name? As a partial Blogg, I resented the idea, although the Blogg element was always less regarded by myself than the Morton element, in my name and nature. Still the Blogg line, though in all its stolid antiquity it had never yielded a hero, was an old line.

'And what name do you think of taking, uncle?'

'Anything but Blogg. I don't like the name of Blogg now. I think I should like Trafford better. Poor old Trafford was my second cousin.'

I wondered whether the changing

of a name from Blogg into Trafford was designed to produce the same results as changing the name of a Trafford into Blogg.

The upshot was that I engaged to come down to Uncle Blogg's, the day after the next day. I was to come in the afternoon, and there were a few friends for dinner that day at the Hall.

Yes, Mr. Blogg lived at a Hall, and the residence had a right to that much-abused term. It was no huge, square, stucco, brick building, which some moneyed vulgarian had run up and then cheaply entitled a Hall. The Bloggs had had their thousand freehold acres from time immemorial, and the Hall ran back to a respectable antiquity. They retained the largest part of the land, called the Home Farm, in their own hands; and I am not sure that the living off the produce and a lot of farming ways had not partially contributed to make Blogg what he was. Still Blogg had his place, and he entertained and was entertained by other county people like himself, and when he gave a dinner, which wasn't often, he gave as good a dinner as might be.

It was years since I had been in the house, and I tried to revive my faded boyish recollections when I had come to great grief, when let loose in it one summer vacation. Blogg came blowing into my room, telling me that he would get the dinner over first and then he would tell me all about legal matters. 'And it's a regular sessions dinner, too,' he said, but that's mostly an accident. There's the Recorder, Mr. Serjeant Daldy, and Smithers, the attorney, who had the getting up of the case against her, and Jones, his friend the barrister, who's staying with Smithers, and to whom I expect he will give the brief for the prosecution, and the parson of the next parish: I don't ask my own parson, because he will read the offertory sentences, though he knows I don't approve of it, and Squire Glubb, whom you may have heard of.' And he went off to see about the wine, leaving me to dress and find my way into the drawing-room.

When I got into the drawing-room there was a thin, faded, vanishing fraction of a woman there, the companion and duenna of the ward. The ward herself was rather a jolly girl, with nice eyes and hair and pretty manners. Then there was Parson Glubb, rector, and brother to the Squire, with his wife and daughters, who were generally called, to distinguish them from the other lot, Mrs. Rector and Miss Rector. The serjeant was a pleasant, active, vulgar little man, who had rather dropped out of his barrister practice, and was supposed to be on the look-out for a county court judgeship. There was Jones, a man of little merit, whom I looked on as my forensic enemy, and whom I felt I could double up in any physical or metaphysical sense completely. The attorney was a sharp fellow, to whom I resolved to be affable, for I already had a deep instinctive respect for attorneys. I had settled in my own mind that I would attend Seacombe sessions and assizes, and make Seacombe the starting-point of a glorious legal career.

'It is a queer start,' said Uncle Blogg to me, 'but Kate will have to do some of the waiting at table. Susan's laid up with an attack of British cholera.'

I had no difficulty in recognising Kate, who, with another hand-maiden, helped the two serving men. A delicate, pretty, dove-eyed, glossy-haired, graceful maid was Kate, in the modest style of lady's-maid. She did what waiting she had to do extremely well; but it was so odd to see her attending these legal monsters, who in a day or two would be assisting each other to tear her in pieces; the solicitor who even now was doing his best on paper to blacken her character; the counsel who would be telling the jury they could not lay their heads on their pillows unless they convicted; and the judge, who, whether he was in good or bad humour, might give her either imprisonment or penal servitude. But such are the odd pictures which every now and then turn up in the phantasmagoria of human

life. No wonder there was a deep hectic flush on the frightened girl's cheek. I liked the maid much, and I liked the young mistress better. However I exchanged only a few formal words with her, and as she glided from the dining-room, she said, quietly, 'Let me see you in the blue room as soon as you can.' I made my way from the dining-room with its gloomy talk about poor-rates, church-rates, and future education rates, into the hall. There I encountered Kate, who, I firmly believe, was anxiously lying in wait for me, and who took me straight off at once into the 'blue room.' And a very comfortable room was the 'blue room,' with its low fire, and the curtains snugly drawn, and as handsome and frank a hostess as Miss Trafford admitting you at once into a confidential intimacy. Poor Kate showed by her quivering lip and streaming eyes how acutely she felt her position, and I was pleased to see the fair young mistress caressingly stroke the fair hand-maiden's glossy hair. In point of fact, they looked two young ladies together. Kate had always had tender nurture and had been with gentle people—a thoughtful girl, nice-mannered, fond of reading, as I found afterwards, and as little likely to qualify as a felon as any soft-spoken wench could be.

'Oh, sir,' she said, 'and is it you that I've got to look to to save me from being sent to jail?' And the young creature began to sob and went down on her knees by the side of her mistress.

'We are in great trouble, Mr. Morton,' said Miss Trafford; 'here's poor Kate accused of a robbery of which she is as innocent as you or I can be. The trial's coming off in a few days' time, and nothing is done in the way of defending her.'

'Good gracious, Miss Trafford; and hasn't she instructed a solicitor?'

'It's all Mr. Blogg's fault,' said Clara Trafford. 'He said at first that Kate's friends must be at the expense of defending her. I said I should do so myself, and didn't care what it cost. He then said that he had a relation who would do it

cheaper and better than anybody else, and who was such a very clever man. Are you the very clever man?"

"I hope there won't be much cleverness required to get your servant off, Miss Trafford," I replied. "Now tell me all about it. In many simple cases a short time is quite as good or better than a long time, in getting up a defence."

The story was soon told me, and matters certainly looked a little dark against handsome Kate. She had gone into a shop at Seacombe and asked for a lace handkerchief. Now a girl in her station of life had not the least need of a lace handkerchief; but the maids have always imitated the mistresses, and so dainty a girl as Kate had more excuse than most of them. A set of handkerchiefs were shown her, but they were all beyond the range of her purse. She purchased some trifle for a few coppers and departed. As soon as she was gone it was discovered that an expensive lace handkerchief was missing. The shop-keeper ran after her and brought her back. She denied any knowledge of it, and it was presently found in her muff. The case seemed to lie in a nutshell, and certainly innumerable people have been convicted on slighter evidence. If a person is found in possession of stolen property directly after it is stolen, and is unable to give any account how it came into his or her possession, the law, not unreasonably, presumes that it has got hold of the thief.

I confess I was not very hopeful, notwithstanding my interesting client and her still more interesting protectress. I however concealed my despondings with all the address of a fashionable physician. "I will tell you what you shall do," I said; "it will be the cheapest for Kate, and save the expense of a solicitor. As we are rather driven into a corner for time it may really be the best plan. You shall give me what is called a dock fee, that is to say you shall give me a guinea, which I shall give back to Kate. There will also be half a crown for my clerk. I mention this as we

must be regular, and a dock fee is rather a peculiar case. You must give it me with a copy of the depositions. Have you got them?" I asked.

"No, no," said Miss Trafford; "we left it all to Mr. Blogg, and he has really done nothing."

I anathematized Uncle Blogg, and allowed no scruples of relationship to interfere with a very free expression of my sentiments respecting him. I asked Miss Morton to let a servant go over to Seacombe the first thing in the morning to get the depositions from the clerk to the magistrates, for which she would have to pay three-halfpence a page.

"Do you know anything, Kate, about this shop?" I asked of my fair client.

"Oh yes, sir," said Kate; "the shop's good enough, but it was that nasty fellow, Jem Stanton, who served me."

"And who's Jem Stanton?" I asked.

"Oh! I can't abide him sir," said Kate. "He came and knocked at the kitchen window one Sunday afternoon, and wanted me to keep company with him, but I wouldn't. None of the girls like him, for he is a bad one. Ask cook if he isn't."

Here was a gleam of light. I thought that this would be important. First, I asked Kate whether she thought it possible that Jem Stanton might have put the handkerchief into her muff. This was quite a new idea to Kate. She also candidly said that she did not think it likely. Her own version, which was a little roundabout, was this. She had left her handkerchief behind her, and this first led to her going into the shop. Once there, she thought of a much-desired lace handkerchief. She quite forgot, in her interest about the lace handkerchief, that she had none of her own about her, and had mechanically put the lace one into her muff, under the impression that it was her own virtually non-existent one. I thought that this would be much too elaborate for a British jury. They will always take a simple explanation instead of a complicated

one. Now a verdict of Guilty is always eminently terse, simple, and satisfactory. As a rule you can't go far wrong if you convict. I believe that only about two per cent. of convictions are wrong, and about fifty per cent. of the acquittals.

Next morning I looked carefully through the depositions. I was, however, substantially in possession of all the facts. A policeman had deposed that when he took Kate into custody she had owned that she was very sorry, which that functionary chose to interpret as a confession of guilt. It was obvious, however, that this was not by any means a fair or necessary construction. I called the cook up, and she gave Jem Stanton as bad a character as any Jem Stanton could desire to have. He was the dread of mothers, and had once been fined for violently assaulting a girl who had refused his advances. I also went over to Seacombe and set on foot all sorts of inquiries respecting the character of the draper who was prosecutor. To my great joy, I discovered that a year or two before he had called his creditors together and made a composition with them. I now began to breathe; I thought I had a strong chance for an acquittal, and even a better one for some forensic display.

For the next few days, Clara Trafford and I were the closest of allies. In pursuance of my legal duties, I thought it necessary to be in constant conference with her respecting the case of our interesting client. I do not say that she formed the incessant subject of our conversation all the hours that we paced the shrubbery or sat together in the drawing-room. I was able to find out that Clara Trafford was a fine-hearted girl, of excellent culture and understanding, with a well-deserved contempt of Uncle Blogg and his ways. I ventured, indeed, to snub Uncle Blogg—especially as he showed a disposition to join our councils—with considerable sternness, and told him that his delays had well-nigh jeopardized my client's liberty and life. I really worked very hard for Kate, inasmuch as taking a dock fee—a cir-

cumstance which *per se* was highly gratifying to Uncle Blogg—I was both solicitor and counsel for the defence. Clara produced a beautiful old Queen Anne's guinea which had belonged to her mother, and insisted that my fee should come in that shape. I bored a hole through it, and at the present moment wear it proudly on my watch-chain.

Quarter sessions are nothing very grand—they cannot for a moment compete with the importance of the assizes—but they were at Seacombe held in the same great hall as are the assizes; and to a young lady like Miss Trafford, who had never been within any court of law previously, the vast hall seemed very imposing indeed. I was highly curious, but at the same time I was full of hope and energy, and a burning desire to distinguish myself. The occasion may seem a humble one, but many an Oxford or Cambridge man may tell you that his first speech at the Union Debating Club has cost him more anxiety than his first speech in the House of Commons. I had profited by those old Union days and also by a Discussion Forum which we had got up amongst ourselves in the Temple. I was very kindly received at the quarter sessions. It was looked upon as the most natural thing in the world that I should come down to practise in my uncle's part of the country. Mr. Serjeant Daldy gave me a kindly nod, and Mr. Jones, the prosecuting counsel, on the strength of having met me at dinner, called me his learned friend. I was sorry to see handsome Kate go into the dock, for I knew that the bare fact would attach a stigma to her for the rest of her life. This consideration alone ought to make a man very cautious how he ever gives any one into custody. I took care to challenge every linen-draper who was called on the jury. I promise you that the linendraper who prosecuted was quite unprepared for the fiery cross-examination which I showered upon him. I went very fully into the most disagreeable part of that composition business with his creditors. I asked

him whether he had paid or meant to pay for that lace handkerchief alleged to be stolen, and I pretty broadly asserted that he and his family were nothing better than they should be. But even that was little compared to the questioning which Jem Stanton had to undergo. When I made out that he had been a rejected suitor of Kate's, a thrill of sympathy ran through the court. When I brought out that assault case—which wasn't so bad after all, as he had only been fined five shillings—I made him appear a monster in human form. When I had to cross-examine the policeman, I came out in that peculiar vein of bullying the constable which is a favourite amusement in courts of justice. I thundered away in the defence, for there was Uncle Blogg opening his goggle eyes with amazement, and there was Clara glowing with sympathy and interest. After all, the verdict was a toes up. But

it was a toes up in our favour. The prisoner was acquitted, and before the day was over I had the satisfaction of receiving two briefs—one from the solicitor whom I met at dinner at my uncle's—one for the sessions and one for the ensuing assizes.

This is the way in which I commenced going circuit—not unprosperously. Whether Kate's roundabout version was true, or whether the shopman had secreted the handkerchief in her muff, or whether she had really stolen it, I do not profess to say. But there is one thing which I certainly do profess to say. If Uncle Blogg considers that he will get Clara to change her name to Blogg, or if he fancies that he will gain anything by the notion that he will change his own name into Trafford, he will be hugely disappointed. Beyond that, this deponent sayeth not.





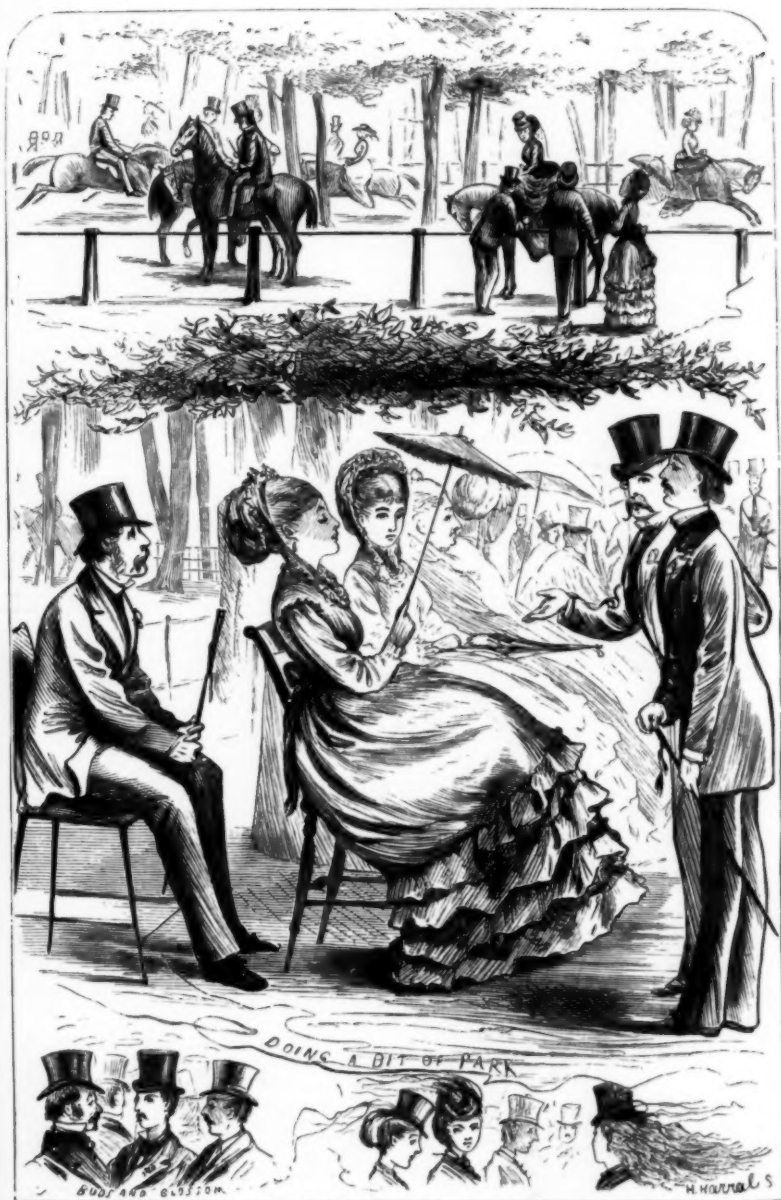
BOATING LIFE AT PUTNEY.

Sketched by A. Chasemore.



AT THE Opera





MAY IN THE PARK.

Sketched by Horace Stanton.

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AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL.

IT is one of the most remarkable characteristics of English life in the present day—the spirit which leads such large numbers of persons to do for nothing the work for which others are paid. There is scarcely a pursuit which has not its amateurs as regularly engaged as its professional followers. The work may be easy or hard, pleasant or unpleasant—it is sure to have its volunteers as well as its regulars, bent either upon amusing themselves, being useful to other people, or it may be combining the two objects. From such a glorious occupation as defending the country to such a merely useful one as looking after drains—every kind of work has its votaries, ready with time, exertion, and money in the cause.

Was there ever seen—to take the most striking instance first—such an organization as our Volunteer Army, in any other country? It is not very well contented just now, and has reason to complain of discouragement at the hands of authority, which insists upon not understanding the principle that, service being rendered without pay, the means of performing that service ought to be supplied by the state. It involves no sacrifice of the independence of the Volunteers to receive money for their expenses, provided the money be employed to meet them, and they do not put it into their own pockets; and it is well worth the while of the state to maintain the force upon those conditions. I believe this is all that the Volunteers are asking, and the concession of the principle would probably remedy many defects which at present affect the discipline, and therefore the efficiency of the service. The first requirements are more stringent regulations to secure attendance at drill, and a little more subordination to command. Without attention to these objects it is of no use to make Volunteers marksmen, for they will never, when occasion calls, be able to put their skill in practice. The want of real authority

falls, too, very hardly upon the officers, whose commissions cost them a great deal of money to maintain, and who cannot learn habits of command if the men will not learn habits of obedience. A great many Volunteers chafe at being under orders, but they ought to remember that the object of discipline is not to degrade them as men but to elevate them as soldiers; and under no circumstances would they be required to stand half the bullying that falls to the lot of the officers of the Army and the Militia, who have to accept a great deal of mortification as an honourable condition of service.

The relations of the Volunteers to the Regulars—of the Amateurs to the Professionals—are such as the former may maintain with every advantage to dignity. There is certainly dignity in doing duty without pay—provided that it is done well—and they are not liable to be called mercenaries by unpleasant persons of ‘peace-movement’ proclivities. They may fairly say that they are as much soldiers by position as any gentleman before the days of standing armies; and our standing army, it must be remembered, is an institution kept up only from year to year: it would fall to pieces at any time were the necessary votes refused by Parliament. The Regulars have, of course, ‘a pull’ over the Volunteers, because they know their business better, and are available to be sent anywhere to fight the battles of their country; but the Volunteers may hold their own, in dignity, with any of her Majesty’s forces. As for the Militia, they are not quite Amateurs and not quite Professionals, that is to say, they are Professionals for a month in the year, insofar as they receive pay for that time, when they are on precisely the same footing as the army. But for the rest of the year they are practically citizens, and may attach themselves to any pursuits they please. There is considerable connection between the Militia and the Army proper.

Every Militia regiment contains many men who have served in the Line; still larger numbers leave the Militia for the Line—indeed the one is familiarly described as the nursery for the latter, and is so, as is especially shown whenever a war breaks out. It is with the officers as with the men. Many officers leave the Line for the Militia; and, whenever there is war, many leave the Militia for the Line. Upon such occasion many Militia regiments go abroad, as they did during the Crimean war and the Indian mutinies, or replace Line regiments sent upon foreign service. When permanently embodied the Militia receives the same pay and allowances as during its annual training—that is to say, it is placed upon the same footing as the regular army; and its discipline and effectiveness, in a very short time, is found to be equally as good. The Militia, too, if professionally inferior to the Line, may at least claim the credit of being the constitutional force of the kingdom. There was no standing army until the time of Charles II.; in the time of Charles I. the only army in the country was, and was called, the Militia.

The regular Reserve Force is no more likely to be abolished than the Life Guards; and it is to be hoped that no neglect, mismanagement, or misunderstanding will put an end to the Volunteers. They have gone down a little in popularity, it must be confessed; but the cause is a highly complimentary one to the force. It is never likely to be wanted, people say: who dreams now of an invasion? True; but the reason why an invasion is no longer on the cards is that the national strength and spirit has shown itself in this form. The case stands thus, in fact: the more efficient the Volunteers become the less likely are they to be wanted; let them be disbanded, and who shall say how soon we may be menaced once more, and be obliged to maintain an army at home such as will drive the British taxpayer mad? The Volunteers have moral force because they represent physical

force, and they thoroughly fulfil the first duty of armaments—which is the maintenance of peace. The Amateurs, in this case, have surely no need to be jealous of the Professionals.

Consider what a change in the national life would be caused by the absence of the Volunteers. No more Rifle Association meetings; no more camps at Wimbledon; no more marches out on Saturdays; no more drills on the familiar grounds; no more social gatherings of the corps; no more stray Volunteers even seen in the streets! The change is difficult to realize after being used to all these things for ten years.

There is no Amateur Navy. The Reserve, called the Mercantile Marine, is a thoroughly professional body. But we have plenty of Amateur Seamen in our yachting men; and a place like Ryde, in the season, is almost as nautical as a place like Portsmouth. I am not aware that there is any rivalry between yachting men and officers of the Royal Navy; but there are circumstances under which the owners of yachts find it difficult to keep up their dignity in connection with their crews. These are not the thorough landmen, who do not profess to know anything about navigation, leave everything to the master whom they engage, and enjoy themselves in their own manner; and, of course, the remark does not apply to gentlemen who are thoroughly competent to take command of their own vessels. I allude to those who know a little and are apt to believe that they know a great deal. A little learning is nowhere so dangerous a thing as at sea; and nowhere does the Amateur appear at such disadvantage compared with the Professional. It is a far more sensible proceeding to make a fool of yourself on shore—in connection with a glazed hat, a monkey jacket, a telescope, and nautical airs generally—than to go afloat under false pretences and make a failure. But there are yachting men going about who are so enthusiastic at the idea of being in command that they assume all the authority of a naval captain

over their crews; and Mr. James Hannay tells us of one of these that he went so far as to give the men extra wages for the privilege of inflicting corporal punishment, in order to keep up the delusion. But this, I suspect, is a piece of service jocularly at the expense of nautical amateurs. I have heard such a story at Malta, where our friend 'Fulke Bisset' probably picked up his information. It has a great deal of the 'Who goes there? Naval officer drunk in a wheelbarrow,' flavour about it.

Clerical Amateurs are not unfrequently to be met with. Of course I do not include in the category dissenting ministers, whose calling is a professional one. I allude to a class of 'serious' laymen who devote their time and their money—in a most worthy manner, it must be admitted—to religious purposes, and are frequently more like clergymen than clergymen themselves. We have a nobleman or two belonging to the class; but, as a general rule, its members are persons of a parish turn of mind, and protect the interests of the church party at vestries, and hold parochial offices in connection with the Establishment. Their self-imposed duties bring them much in connection with tea and elderly ladies; they fall unconsciously into white cravats in the daytime; and the Sunday-school children have an idea that they will eventually be made bishops. They are apt to be fussy, and may have some human frailties in which vanity is concerned; but they are usually estimable people—and it is certain that they might be far worse employed. There is no jealousy between the Amateur and the Professional Clergymen. The latter are assisted and supported by their lay brethren; and they are so secure in their own orders that they have no need to fear competition of a practical kind.

Among Amateur Clergymen there are some who actually preach—preach without being paid, or at least without attaching themselves to any particular congregation. Notable among these is the 'Con-

verted Clown.' After passing a professional life in stealing sausages, making invasions upon costermongers and throwing their wares upon the stage, playing tricks upon respectable tradesmen at their own doors, jumping over red-hot pokers, smashing babies in chests of drawers, and picking up the Pantaloon by the back of his trousers, this gentleman now more profitably occupies himself with the spiritual amelioration of his fellow-creatures. There has been a blacksmith—Elihu Burritt—who performed a similar mission, and there was, as everybody knows, a tinker, who wrote the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' included in the class.

What shall we say of ladies who, led by similar instincts, perform similar functions as far as their sex will permit? There have been female preachers, but I rather refer to Sisters of Charity and Sisters of Mercy, who minister to the spiritual as well as the corporeal wants of their kind. I am here speaking of those who are bound by no vows and belong to no regular establishment—of Protestant ladies, in fact, whose exertions are of a purely voluntary kind, and who may be classed therefore as amateurs. They deserve all honour, for they do much good, and are as active during peace in England as they were during war in the Crimea. And we may praise them especially without any disrespect to those of another Christian church who have formally devoted themselves to similar service. Between the two there cannot—or at least should not—be rivalry, except in work.

Amateur Doctors are rare. There are plenty of people who doctor themselves, and doctor themselves generally to excess. They generally, too, give advice gratis to their friends, and try to find followers. But I have never heard of amateurs in the healing art who go about ministering to strangers. They would have a far worse chance than amateur clergymen; for it is one thing to give up your mind to an experiment, and quite another thing to give up your body. You may take back the one, that is to say,

in common parlance, you may 'change your mind' if any mischief has been done, but your body is beyond control, and the damage may be irremediable. Your mind is used to the process—it has been the subject of continual experiments from your earliest education; it is developed and enlarged by the various experiences; but your body is a very awkward customer and will stand no nonsense. We have therefore to beware of gratuitous advice in medical matters, as especially of quacks, who might be called amateurs, but that their object is money. No; we may talk loosely when in health of the infallibility of the medical profession; we may think ourselves particularly clever upon some points connected with it; and say even that our friend Tompkins has more rational notions upon the subject than half the College of Physicians. But let us, or those near to us, be seriously unwell, we do not trust ourselves, we spurn Tompkins as a man of mere crotchets or a bore. We send straight to the family doctor, duly qualified at the College of Surgeons and Apothecaries' Hall, even though he be not an M.D. into the bargain. We feel that in so doing we do the best for ourselves or others, and that if either do not get over the ailment, the *not* getting over it will be accomplished in the proper course.

There is one description of Professional doctor that may be included in the ranks of the Amateurs, and here again I have to refer to the ladies. Members of their interesting sex are now getting qualified as practitioners; but their entrance into the profession is confined to special instances, and the proceeding is of so out-of-the-way a character that they can scarcely be regarded in connection with the regular professional body. What can you say of persons who are in so anomalous a position that they are not sure whether they ought to wear petticoats or pantaloons, and who usually bewilder their patients by a curious combination of both? Ladies may make very good doctors when they are recognised as matters of course in the profession—by them-

selves and their patients when they are tested by general experience in the capacities to which they aspire. But at present they are only so many flies in amber; the principal consideration involved is how they got there and why they got there. They stand in the position of Amateurs; and most of us, finding anything the matter in our families, would scarcely be so likely to call in their assistance as to send upon speculation to the gentleman with the red lamp round the corner.

A similar conclusion must be come to in the case of Amateur Lawyers. We all know what the client is said to be who 'is his own legal adviser'; and no man is obliged to have professional assistance unless he so desires. But let him beware of dispensing with it. He may advise himself out of court, and may possibly find himself in the right—he has at least the benefit of the chance. But woe be to the man who advocates his own case in court! There is a prejudice against him to begin with. The judge is aware beforehand that he will occupy a longer time, and give a greater amount of trouble, than a professional advocate. The jury very soon find out the fact, and deplore the difficulty they have in understanding the case. The counsel on the other side, for professional reasons, feels instinctive hostility towards the amateur advocate, and, with every appearance of 'distinguished consideration,' fails to treat him with the respect which he accords to a 'learned friend.' Even the usher looks upon him in a spirit of pity mingled with contempt. It is unfortunate for the court, too, that amateur advocates are never men easy to put down. Timid or doubtful persons would not place themselves in the position. They are always assured, persistent, and obstinate in their conduct of the case, whatever they may be. They never 'sit corrected,' even upon a matter of law. They assume from the outset that they know better than the judge or the counsel can tell them; they never expect fair play, and every objection which meets them they consider as part of a conspiracy

to defeat the ends of justice. When they have lost their cases—as they always do—they consider that the conspiracy has triumphed, and ascribe their defeat to the grossest corruption. The fact is that if the amateur advocate has a good case he is sure to make it a bad one; if he has a bad case he is sure to make it worse. You may have the best case in the world, but it will usually happen that there are points connected with it which it is desirable to keep in reserve, whether on account of the unfavourable impression which they convey, or may be made to convey, or because they tend to divert attention from the main issue. A trained counsel will cull from his array of facts and arguments just so much as is essential to his case, and carefully eliminate the rest, to be kept in reserve, for use only should occasion arise. He never proves too much, as to do so is only to expose additional points for attack. He takes care that his positions shall be few, and the strongest he can find, and these he urges again and again, to make them familiar to the court and jury. A case in court is not like a debate in Parliament, the victory is never gained by a side wind. In court you must keep to essentials, and unnecessary matter is most dangerous to introduce. Amateur advocates, besides being hazardous in their law, always fail to appreciate this simple fact; and to aggravate their disadvantage they not only introduce irrelevant points, but they insist upon them, and put the court and the jury out of temper. This is the worst mistake that can be made, and was never known to succeed, except at the Middlesex Sessions, under exceptional conditions to which I need not refer. As a general rule, the amateur advocate, besides placing his case in its worst possible aspect, thoroughly bores everybody about him, and then he is surprised to find himself on the losing side. He is allowed a latitude as to time which would never be accorded to a professional counsel; but this is rather against him—it gives him ‘rope enough’ for a proverbial purpose, for which

he employs it with remarkable punctuality.

I need scarcely say that when the amateur advocate happens to be a lady, all the characteristics referred to are exaggerated and intensified in a remarkable degree. Compared with feminine persistency in a matter of the kind, that of a man is ‘as moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine.’ Women are getting into men’s professions, and we may see lady-lawyers one of these days, but they will never succeed at the Bar. They will look well in their wigs and gowns, perhaps, but beyond that I see no hope for our interesting rivals.

Pictorial art is a great ground for amateurs. Nearly every young lady at school learns drawing, and can copy if she can do no more. What beautiful eyes, noses, and mouths they bring home at holiday time, culminating, it may be, in the head of a hermit or a Madonna! What force they throw into the picture of a stream, with a man fishing in it, for the sake of truth and nature! These productions are a little touched up by the master, but are highly satisfactory to admiring friends. As a general rule, young ladies do nothing more after the master’s influence has departed; but the general taste for art is increasing, and those in whom it is strong do a great deal of good work at Schools of Design, and some of the pupils at South Kensington are of high proficiency. Of these there are Professional as well as Amateur; but of the great body of Art Amateurs comparatively few exhibit pictures or publish sketches; though it may be here mentioned that the best sporting sketches in the most popular comic journal of the day are drawn by the daughter of a Dean. At the principal exhibitions of the year the works of amateurs—that is to say, of persons who do not mean to make money by their works—are comparatively rare in oil-painting, though they are well represented in water-colours: for oil-painting is a laborious art, and people soon get tired of cultivating it for mere pleasure. We have a Royal Princess who is notable among the amateur followers.

of art, and Her Majesty herself is known to be an accomplished artist. I have seen original sketches made by the Queen in mere idle moments which indicate both skill and talent in no small degree. The branch of art pursued by the Princess Alice is, I need scarcely say, Sculpture, the most laborious of all. Her Royal Highness has few followers in this severe study—among ladies, at any rate. Among men we have had some distinguished amateurs, but the most notable were foreigners—Count D'Orsay and the Baron Marochetti; but both of these gentlemen employed their talents professionally, in an incidental manner. Count D'Orsay has left to the public many productions of his chisel and pencil; and among the latter 'the D'Orsay Portraits' are unsurpassed for their artistic ease and grace, as well as the faithful rendering of their originals. They are in a style seldom followed in these days. Free sketching has to a great extent gone out, and literal finish is demanded even in drawing. We used to hear of 'touches' that meant so much; we seldom see them now: the object, whatever it is, must be faithfully represented. Well, there was a great deal of conventionality in the careless sketches of which Reynolds and Lawrence were such masters; but they were evidence of thoroughly artistic hands, and inferior men had to 'try hard to be as easy,' as the Vicar of Wakefield's daughters did to imitate the manners of Lady Blarney and the Honourable Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs. Baron Marochetti was an illustrious example of an amateur sculptor who became professional; but his inspiration was unequal. Who would suppose that the Richard Cœur de Lion, now down at Westminster, could have come from the same hand as the Lord Palmerston which was banished last year from Palace Yard?

Theatrical Amateurs. You see them on all sides. In public and in private they are equally at home. Of late years their relation to the professionals has been considerably increased; the association indeed has become very intimate. They are to be found in all classes of set-

tled society, from small clerks and shopboys upwards. Private theatres have been long since existent at which the humble amateurs—frequently with professional views—have exhibited themselves to their friends. These establishments are self-supporting, and the actors pay fees in proportion to the importance of their parts. Thus Richard III. may be obliged to disburse a couple of pounds for the privilege of airing the winter of his discontent, flirting with the Lady Anne, offering his kingdom for a horse, and conducting his single combat with Richmond on Bosworth Field, while Catesby and Ratcliffe will probably obtain *their* privileges for a few shillings. But all must pay, in order to cover expenses; and the system of payments being thus regulated, the result is not uniformly successful. The result, indeed, is apt to be dreary in the extreme; and I believe that, as a rule, there is nothing more melancholy to be seen in London than performances of this class. In better grades of society a better system prevails. Drawing-room performances are apt to be absurd, but they are usually separated from vulgarity; they are apart from the bitterness of ambition, and are cultivated by men for sport. Some fun is at least got out of them, and they afford the opportunity to young gentlemen and young ladies of testing talents which are not likely to be tested elsewhere. But the taste for displays of the kind has taken such a hold upon society that a large class of amateurs will not, in these days, condescend to drawing-rooms. They engage concert-rooms, music-halls, and bijou theatres for their displays; they give their privacy a large latitude; receive money for admission, under cover of some charitable object; and bring so many strangers to see them that they enjoy much of the excitement which comes from the presence of an actual public. In this manner men and women of real position in society manage to test their qualifications before audiences which, for the most part, know very little about them, and are therefore impartial judges of the performers. Sometimes such

entertainments are of a very satisfactory character, thanks to the drilling from professional people undergone beforehand; at other times they do not exceed the standard of drawing-room displays, and these occasionally include things very felicitously done in the way of charades. Some of the most successful performances in private life, indeed, are those improvised in country houses—not quite in earnest—and where the ladies especially are freed from the embarrassment which comes from preparation and the consciousness that strangers will be among the audience. We all know the fun that may be got out of such recreations; and where men and women are thrown together to amuse one another, there can be no pleasanter way of accomplishing the object. Country houses have their nights as well as their days; you cannot be always out of doors; and a time comes when conventional amusements fail, and that important period included in 'after dinner' must be provided for in other ways. Theatricals are thus a great resource, and they are all the pleasanter when nobody cares much whether they succeed or fail.

But, unfortunately, all Amateurs are not content merely to divert themselves and their friends. They become ambitious, and nothing will please them—men and women alike—but displaying themselves under conditions of semi-publicity. Then it is that the halls and concert-rooms are engaged, and benevolent objects discovered for the gratification of individual tastes. It is very charming for those engaged, who have all the fun of the rehearsals, and all the honour and glory—if there be any of those articles going about—of the grand representation. But I am not so sure that the audiences are equally fortunate. We have in London, however, more than one amateur company that knows its business very well—having had careful training from professionals—and with real talent of its own to give it a *raison d'être*.

India—I mean of course the India of Anglo-Indians—is a great field for private theatricals. To say no-

thing of the Presidency towns, there are few stations that have not their theatres, and the same provision may be found in most barracks of European regiments. In the latter the men are the principal performers—officers occasionally joining them. Everything is done by amateurs, even to the scenery, and the result is usually most satisfactory. The one drawback is the female parts, which are necessarily filled by men. A juvenile ensign, however, is very apt to be ladylike in appearance, and in the absence of hirsute adornments he makes up very well. I have seen triumphant illusions in this way; but one has a natural prejudice in favour of the reality, and the deprivation *is* a drawback, there can be no doubt. But what can be done? Ladies of position will not play in barracks; and in a country like India they are too well known to unbend to the extent that they sometimes do in England; and it is seldom that the wives of non-commissioned officers and privates are found to have the qualifications. In the Presidencies and larger stations amateurs are generally able to get professional actresses to help them, as they do frequently at home. How the dresses are made is a marvel; but Indian tailors are very clever at copying any models that are set before them, so the performances do not at all suffer in this respect. The ensigns who play the ladies are usually set up in costume by their friends, some of whom are known to have been so condescending as to help them to dress.

On board the Peninsular and Oriental Company's ships theatricals are a favourite amusement. The materials for a stage are usually found ready to be set up on the quarterdeck at a few hours' notice; and one of the officers of the ship is sure to have a collection of 'Lacy's Acting Editions,' which indeed are to be found in most stations in India: so there is no great delay in getting up a dramatic performance, even in the midst of the Indian Ocean.

Some of the most devoted amateurs

in this country used to be children. But toy stages seem to have gone out, having given way probably to the scientific recreations which are now so popular. But in minor neighbourhoods you may still see the materials for mimic plays; and even 'Skelt's Scenes and Characters'—a penny plain, twopence coloured—have not entirely disappeared. I suspect that they are patronised mainly by the humbler classes of the juvenile community—those who subsequently develop into actors themselves, at the private theatres already referred to.

In London, of late years, Amateurs have considerably invaded the stage in the character of Professionals. The fact shows the strong hold that amateur acting has taken upon society. But I need not enter into this part of the question, which has recently been discussed in the pages of this magazine.

Literary Amateurs—their name is legion. They are everywhere, and write for everything. They have an advantage over Pictorial and Dramatic Amateurs that they do not—or suppose they do not—require special training. Pen, ink, and paper, and a certain command of words, are presumed to supply every requisite. This, at least, is certain—that the want of technical experience may be dispensed with in many walks of literature, so that there be real talent in its place. Some prose writers, as all poets are said to be, are born and not made. The literary faculty—

'Like Dian's kiss, unask'd, unought,
It gives itself, and is not bought.'

But only in exceptional cases. The best writers among us—and notably the two who are most popular and prolific—have borne testimony to the labour and the study which they have found it necessary to undergo before obtaining the full use of their natural powers. And if Lord Lytton and Mr. Dickens have both experienced difficulties in development, what may not be expected from smaller people? But some men are doubtless more ready than others—for the reason, as may be generally found, that they have

less depths to explore, that they are less fastidious, and do not attempt so much as their better stored and more ambitious brethren. It is easier to pick up a little gold lying on the surface than to dig for vast treasures beneath.

However all this may be, it is a fact that amateur writers abound in London. Had they all their own way, no professional writer would be allowed to pursue his calling; the amateurs would write all the books, the plays, the reviews, the magazines, and the newspapers. Every publisher will bear me out when I say that he has more manuscripts sent to him than he could possibly publish were his business a dozen times as extensive as it is. Ask any theatrical manager, is he not inundated at his stage-door by showers of pieces which experience tells him it is not worth his while even to read? Put the same question to the editor of any periodical—magazine or newspaper—and he will tell you the same tale. The contributions that pour in upon him are unceasing. They exhibit great variation in tone and style, and the writers allege all kinds of grounds for sending them. Some are supremely confident, and, taking it for granted that their MS. will be published, stipulate that it shall undergo no alteration at the editor's hands; others of this class make remuneration the principal condition, and request that a cheque be forwarded to them by return of post. On the other hand, many are so diffident as to the merits of their productions, that they request the editor to correct any errors in style or grammar that they may contain. Various touching personal excuses are sometimes made by the writers. One has a widowed mother to support, or he would not venture to take up his pen. Another has recently lost her husband, and is seeking consolation in literary pursuits. A third is confined to his room with a lingering malady, and does not know what to do with himself; or is watching over a sick wife, and seeks literary occupation to lighten the long hours. A candid gentleman will occasionally say that:

he has just lost a lucrative appointment, and is 'taking to literature' because he sees no chance of making money in any other way. An enormous number of governesses send contributions with the apology that they wish to add to their slender incomes.

Occasionally an amateur will avow himself a genuine aspirant for fame, who courts the Muse like a lover. But the majority rather patronise Parnassus, or consider the Castalian Fount principally in its vulgar relation to 'keeping the pot boiling.' These people, one and all, take it for granted that anybody can write well enough for the periodicals of the day who chooses to do so; and many, as we have seen, add the complimentary assurance that it is the last thing they would do if they had a chance of doing anything else. They very soon find out their mistake, you will say. Not always: the bulk of them, I believe, who are neglected by editors, attribute the fact to a conspiracy of the professional interest against them. 'Grub Street,' they contemptuously say, 'keeps strangers off its ground; literature is a monopoly; the regular scribblers are jealous,'—and so forth. It is wonderful how people who can scarcely put six lines of sense together, claim the privilege of sneering at 'Grub Street,' and stigmatising professional writers as 'scribblers' and 'hacks.' Not long since a man who can just manage to write a decent letter dropped in upon a distinguished author, and saw him dashing off 'copy' with considerable facility. With the composure of his class, he lit a cigarette, and waited until his companion should be at leisure. As he saw slip after slip being added to the MS., he musingly said, 'What a pity I did not think of taking to writing when I was hard up!'

I have hitherto been referring to the impracticable amateurs. But there are hundreds of persons not dependent upon literature, and whose main object is not that of making money, who not only contribute habitually to the best periodicals of the day—newspapers included—but write books into the

bargain. Indeed, half the books published, certainly most of those upon special subjects, are written by men and women who are not professional in the full sense of the term. In cultivated classes of society it is difficult to say who does not write in these days. Her Most Gracious Majesty is a writer as well as an artist; and ladies of rank and fashion find it the most natural thing in the world to write novels and books of travels. Amateurs—on the practicable list—crowd the periodicals, and ladies are especially enthusiastic as volunteers of the pen. Even in the weekly and daily press, many of the stock contributors are ladies, who write 'leaders' or lighter articles. A great many of these Volunteers doubtless regard the Regulars as somewhat inferior to themselves. It is all very well, they fancy, to write because you please to do so; but to write professionally is 'low.' There is a great deal of this feeling abroad, and some periodicals give the preference to amateurs, as being less likely to be hackneyed in their ideas. There is a superb affectation of the kind in some 'high-class,' or semi-fashionable periodicals; but the editors usually find that amateurs, though very useful occasionally, are not to be depended upon for long; the professionals have to do the bulk of the work; and the fun of the thing is, that the most high-flown and 'swell' style of articles—attributed to noblemen and statesmen—are usually found to be the work of some *littérateur* who is almost a Bohemian, or at best some briefless barrister in the Temple, the main object in either case being the vulgar remuneration.

The amateurs themselves soon get out of the affectation of superiority. That is to say, if they are successful, and care about the pursuit, they soon cease to be amateurs, and take their proper rank among the professionals. For a writer who writes habitually, and receives payment for his writings, must be included in the latter class. He may have private resources—may even be independent of his pen—but he is professional for all that. If not,

we must hold that an officer of the army who has a private fortune—and few officers of the army are quite dependent upon their pay—is not professional, but only an amateur; and the same remark will apply to benefited clergymen, or lawyers, or doctors in regular practice. Now many volunteer authors begin by disdaining payment, as Lord Byron did. But like Lord Byron—who may, I think, be considered a professional writer—they soon overcome this scruple, and exact their dues as zealously as any of their brethren. Ask any publisher or any editor who stands out for the highest terms. He will tell you that they are the writers of the highest social rank and position, who are of the volunteer element in literature. Their vanity, indeed, would not permit them long to write gratuitously; for without the practical test how are they to know what they are worth?

Poets, by-the-way, seldom disdain to make the most of their muse; and when they are really popular this amounts to a great deal. The Laureate is said to realize fairy sums from his writings, the sale of which 'goes on for ever,' and a younger poet, who also 'sells,' is believed to be following in the same pleasant course.

Among the members of the regular professions there are a great many regular writers. Clergymen continually connect themselves with literature in the most professional manner; doctors do so occasionally; and barristers are everywhere in the pursuit—though, to be sure, many of these have little or no practice, and some do not even seek it. Writing, as a regular business, is considered in the way of a man's getting on at the Bar. Your solicitor is jealous and suspicious, and will not believe that two things can be done at once. Literature, he considers too, is apt to make a man fanciful and crotchety, and unfitted to act a hard and stern part in legal affairs. The idea is, to a great extent, a delusion. I believe that literary training is conducive to a breadth of mind which is an important element in advocacy—con-

ducive to getting out of grooves, and gaining causes, far more than is generally supposed. It is certain that some of our most successful lawyers have been extensively engaged in literature. To take only a couple of instances in our own time. Judge Talfourd wrote plays while in the height of his legal practice; and Mr. Samuel Warren wrote novels during the busiest period of his professional career. There are many practising barristers in the present day who might be included in the list—most notably, perhaps, in the field of journalism.

Men in the public service largely contribute to literature. Statesmen and diplomatists, if they do nothing else, do much in Memoirs. Taking only our own time, and citing only a few instances. Lord Derby was a literary man, and might have lived by his pen. Lord Lytton is a literary man, if ever there was one, and a professional one too, for literature has always been his main pursuit—public life only his occasional distraction. The same may be said of Mr. Disraeli before he gained a position in politics; since that time he has rarely employed his pen, and has been very little associated with literature, though I am glad to see that he is once more to the front. Mr. Gladstone is a man of letters of a high class; but his literature is the result of his scholarship—he has never written in a professional spirit. Sir George Cornewall Lewis was an illustrious example of the literary volunteers; and so was Lord (Sidney) Herbert, in a lesser degree. There is no need to mention minor men of this class.

The Army and Navy have always contributed valiant Soldiers of the Pen, but never in such numbers as in these days, when, among junior officers especially, you may find an author in almost every regiment and almost every ship. The superior education now required in the service will sufficiently account for the fact. How seldom do we find an officer of either service in France who has anything to do with literature!

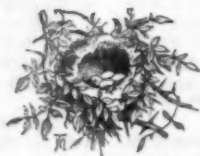
That the elements which we call amateur for the sake of distinction

—but with the qualification insisted on above—should exist in the *personnel* of literature—is doubtless an advantage both to literature and the public. It is a mistake to suppose that the highest and most original creations of thought and imagination have come 'like Diana's gift, unasked, unsought.' It too frequently happens that these triumphs have to be asked very frequently, and to be sought with much pertinacity, before they will consent to arrive. Some of the most glorious things in our language have been produced under pressure; and the greatest works in all languages that have come down to us have been the offspring of men who may fairly be called professional. But volunteers—in current literature especially—have frequently a freshness of their own, and bring to particular subjects a particular knowledge not always to be commanded elsewhere. They become professional when they set regularly to work, and after that there is no need to consider them as exceptions.

There are a great many examples of the association of the amateur and the professional element in less intellectual pursuits. There are gentlemen and professional players at cricket who are very good matches for one another. There are amateurs as well as professional pugi-

lists, who are not quite so easily matched. There are amateurs in boating, too, and the best crews are quite capable of holding their own against any regulars that may arise. The same competition exists in athletic sports generally, where amateurs have things much their own way; and gentlemen jockeys are not apt to be far behind in a race. At billiards the few professionals have an advantage which comes from exceptional ability and constant practice. There are amateurs, too, in mechanical pursuits. Some men make all kinds of things with lathes, and others have been known to construct steam-engines for their amusement—as Louis XVI. had a fancy for lockmaking. But these nearly exhaust the list of pursuits in which amateurs are engaged. That so much interest should be taken in so many avocations, without the inducement of profit except in the few cases where profits are incidental, is one of the best signs of the energy and active spirit of the nation. On the Continent there is a great deal of play and just a little sport; but gentlemen seldom devote themselves to objects that require skill, patience, labour, and thought to carry them out, without more material inducement than—even in the exceptional fields of literature and art—is offered to amateurs in this country.

S. L. R.



A DOG HUNT ON THE BERWYNS.

THANKS to the columns of the sporting papers, every Englishman, whatever his occupation, is sufficiently familiar with the details of fox-hunting, and all other kinds of hunting usually practised in merry England; but few, I fancy, have either seen or heard of a dog-hunt. It has fallen to my lot to participate in such a hunt; one, too, which was quite as exciting as a wolf-hunt must have been in the olden time, or as that most glorious of sports, otter-hunting, is now. Imagine to yourself a three days' chase after a fierce and savage dog, a confirmed sheep worrier, and that in the midst of the picturesque ruggedness and grandeur of the Welsh hills.

Some three or four miles east from Bala, the Berwyn Mountains raise their heathery summits in the midst of a solitude broken only by the plaintive bleat of a lost sheep or the shouts of men in search of it.

For miles the purple moorland rolls on without a moving creature to break the stillness. Deep ravines run down on either hand through green, ferny sheep-walks, dotted with innumerable sheep. These ravines in winter time, when the snow lies deep on the hills, are, when not frost-bound, roaring torrents. In the summer, huge blocks of stone are scattered about in strange confusion, and a tiny stream can scarcely find its way between them. Lower down still can be seen, here and there, a farmhouse, in some sheltered glen, kept green all the year round by the trickling moisture. Further off still, in the valleys, are villages and hamlets tenanted by hardy Welsh sheep-farmers and dealers.

In the least-exposed corners of the sheep-walks are folds built of loose, un-mortared stones, in which the sheep huddle to find shelter from the fury of the frequent storms which sweep over the mountains.

As the wealth of the hill farmers consists chiefly of sheep, if a dog once takes to worrying them, he is

either kept in durance vile, or killed. The habit once acquired is never got rid of; and after a sheep-dog has once tasted blood, it becomes practically useless to the farmer. The quantity of sheep that can be killed by such a dog in a short time is almost incredible.

It may be imagined, therefore, with what feelings the Berwyn farmers heard of sheep after sheep being killed on their own and neighbouring farms, by a dog which nobody owned, and which ran loose on the mountains catering for itself. Descending from the lonelier parts of the hills, it would visit the sheep-walks and kill, as it appeared, for the pure love of killing; in most cases leaving the mangled bodies on the spot.

Month after month ran by, and it still eluded the vengeance of the indignant hillmen. The most exaggerated accounts were current respecting its size and ferocity. No two versions agreed as to its colour, though all gave it enormous size. As 'it afterwards turned out, it was a black and white foxhound bitch.

Everybody carried a gun, but on the few occasions that the dog came within shot, it appeared to be shot proof. The loss of numerous sheep was becoming serious; in some instances the farmers suffered heavily. It was the staple topic of conversation. From time to time, paragraphs, such as the following, appeared in the papers published in the neighbouring towns:

'THE RAPACIOUS DOG.—The noted sheep destroyer on the Berwyn hills still continues to commit his depredations, in spite of all efforts to kill him.

'The last that was seen of him was on Sunday morning, by Mr. Jones on the Syria sheep-walk, when the dog was in the act of killing a lamb. Mr. Jones was armed with a gun at the time, and tried to get within gunshot range; but it seems that the animal can scent a man approaching him from a long distance, so he made off im-

mediately. After it became known to the farmers and inhabitants of Llandrillo that he had been seen, a large party went up to the mountain at once, and were on the hills all day, but nothing more was heard of him till late in the evening, when he was again seen on Handwr sheep-walk, and again entirely lost. On Monday a number of foxhounds were expected from Tanybwch, and if a sight of him can be obtained, no doubt he will be hunted down and captured, and receive what he is fully entitled to—capital punishment.

On a bright May morning, five months after the first appearance of the sheep-destroyer, a pack, consisting of a dozen couple of fox-dogs, with their huntsman, started up the lane from Llandderfel to the hills, followed by a motley crowd of farmers and labourers, armed with guns and sticks, and numbering many horsemen.

Up the lane till the hedges gave place to loose stone walls, higher still till the stone walls disappeared, and the lane became a track, and then a lad came leaping down the hill, almost breathless, with the news that the dog had been seen on a hill some six miles away.

Up the mountain, down the other side, up hill after hill, following the sheep-tracks, the cavalcade proceeded, until we reached the spot where our quarry had been last seen. A line of beaters was formed across the bottom of a glen, and proceeded up the hill. Up above was Dolydd Ceriog, the source of the Ceriog, which came through a rent in the moorland above.

A wilder scene could not be imagined. On either side the hills rose up, until their peaks were sharply defined against the blue. The steep sides were covered with gorse and fern, with fantastic forms of rock peering through. At the bottom the infant Ceriog eddied and rushed over and among rocks of every shape and size, forming the most picturesque waterfalls. In front up the ravine the numerous cascades leaped and glittered, growing smaller and smaller, until the purple belt of moorland was reached.

The hounds quartered to and fro, and the men shouted in Welsh and English. The hardy Welsh horses picked their way unerringly over the *débris*.

'Yonder he is,' was the cry, as up sprang the chase a hundred yards ahead. From stone to stone, from crag to crag, through the water, through the furze and fern fled the dog, and the foxhounds catching sight and scent, followed fast. At first they gained, but when the pursued dog found it was terrible earnest for her, she laid herself well to her work—mute.

Startled by the unusual noise, the paired grouse flew whirring away. The sheep were scattered in confusion, and a raven flew slowly away from a carcass. Upward still we went, the footmen having the best of it on the uneven ground—

'Upward still to wilder, lonelier regions,

Where the patient river fills its urn

From the oozy moorlands, 'mid the boulders;

Cushioned deep in moss, and fringed with fern.'

Now the hounds are over the crest, and soon we followed them. We now had the bogs to contend with, worse enemies than the rocks.

'Diawil John Jones, I am fast,' we heard and saw an unfortunate pony up to its belly in the bog. Another stumbles in a crevice and sends its rider headlong. We footmen have still the best of it, although it is no easy matter to run through the heather.

We had now reached the other side of the mountain, and were fast descending into the valley of the Dee. There seemed a probability of our catching the quarry here; but no, she left the heather—much to my relief, it must be confessed—and made for the valley, past a farm; now well in advance of her pursuers; over the meadows; then, for a short distance, along the Bala and Corwen line. Then past Cynwyd village, where the crowd of people, and the various missiles sent after her, failed to stop her. Then through the churchyard, and along the road for some distance.

Here a man breaking stones hurled his hammer at the bitch, but missed her.

Turning again, she made for the hills, running with unabated speed, although she had been hunted for nearly ten miles. The original pursuers had melted away, but we were reinforced by numbers of others.

Here I obtained a pony and set off again.

By this time the hounds were in full cry up the hillside. Mile after mile, over the hills we followed, now only by scent, as the dog had made good use of her time, while the hounds were hampered by people crossing the scent at the village.

'The shades of night were falling fast,' when we came to a brook flowing from the moorland. Here the scent was lost, and the wild dog was nowhere to be seen. We held a council of war as to what was to be done. I was the only horseman present at first, but by-and-by the huntaman and others came up, bog-besmeared, and in a vicious frame of mind. We looked a queer group, as we sat in the light of some dead fern that somebody had kindled. Some were sitting on stones; others kneeling down, drinking from the brook; some whipping the tired dogs in, and others gesticulating wildly.

One thing was evident—nothing more could be done that evening; and the hounds were taken to their temporary home, to rest all the morrow, and resume the hunt on the day after.

On the morrow, from earliest dawn, messengers were coursing the glens in all directions, with invitations to people far and near to come and assist in the hunt. For myself, I was glad to rest my tired limbs. Although pretty well used to mountain work, I was quite done up; still, I resolved to see the end of the fun, and hired another pony.

The day after, the men kept pouring in to the place of rendezvous, till I was sure the majestic hills had never before witnessed such an assemblage. From far and near they came. Many, like myself, were mounted upon Welsh ponies. We commenced beating; and the Berwyns rang with the unearthly yells of the crowd. We reached Cader

Fronwen, one of the highest of the Berwyns, without meeting with a trace.

Here I was put *hors de combat* by my pony sticking fast in a bog; and as every one was too busy to help me, there I had to stay, and the hunt swept on. Soon the noise of the beaters died away, and I was left alone, sitting on a stone which peered out of the bog, holding the bridle of my unfortunate steed, and every now and then cutting heather and pushing it under its belly, to prevent the poor creature sinking any deeper into the mire. Here's a pretty fix, I thought.

Soon the mist which enveloped the summit of Cader Fronwen came sweeping down the gorge in a torrent of rain; and, even if my pony had been free, it would have been madness to stray from where I was, as I could not see two yards before me, and I did not know the paths.

By-and-by I heard them coming back, and then saw them looming gigantic in the mist. After having extricated my pony, as I was chilled and wet through, I made the best of my way to Llangynog, while the rest of the party—or multitude, rather—made for the Llanrhaeadr hills, but as I afterwards learnt, without success. Tired with a hard and long day's work, the men separated, and made off for their respective homes. No traces of the dog had been found, although every likely hill had been well scoured.

Some of the people averred that the devil must be in the dog. The major part of the farmers believed that the savage animal had been frightened away, and most probably would not be met with again for some time. Acting under this conviction, the hounds were sent back by train the next morning.

The morrow was beautifully fine; and, little expecting that I should see the death of the sheep-worrier, I had gone for a ramble over the hills, armed with my geological hammer. I was sitting on a slab in an isolated quarry, watching the varying tints of the hillside, as shadow and sunshine coursed each other over the tender spring green of the grass, the darker green of the

new fern, and the warm yellow-brown of last year's fronds, and admiring the contrast of the grey rocks angrily jutting out amidst the loveliness, and the whole crowned with the purple heather, rising above a narrow belt of mist, when a man, gun in hand, came clinking down the sloping rubbish, digging his heels in at each step, and excitedly told us—the two or three quarrymen and myself—that he had seen the dog lying on a rock about a mile away.

A boy was despatched to summon the neighbouring farmers. In a very short space of time, about fifty were on the spot, armed with guns of every conceivable make and age. Stealthily creeping up the hill, we were sent in different directions, so as to surround the sheep-walk where she lay.

In half an hour's time, a gradually lessening circle was formed, all proceeding as silently as possible, and taking advantage of every tuft of fern or stunted thorn, so as to get as near as possible before arousing the sleeping dog.

There was a distance of about eighty yards between each man, when the brute rose up, and stretched herself, showing her white and glistening fangs.

Uttering a low growl as she became aware of her position, she set off in a long swinging gallop towards the heather. Just in that direction there appeared to be a man missing from the cordon, and a wide gap was left through which it seemed probable she would escape, and a storm of shouts arose. Just, however, as escape seemed certain, a

sheet of flame poured out from behind a clump of thorn bushes and fern, and a loud report went reverberating over the glens. The dog's neck turned red, and she rolled over and over, uttering yelp after yelp in her agony. There was a miscellaneous charge from all sides. Crash came the butt-end of the gun which had shot her on her body, with such force that the stock was splintered. Bang! bang! everybody tried to get a hit at her, even after she was dead.

When life was quite extinct, we all gathered together, and a whoop of triumph awoke the echoes, starting the lapwings on the moorland.

As we marched down to the village we fired a volley in token of our success, and cheer after cheer told of the gladness with which it was welcomed by the villagers. The man who fired the lucky shot was carried through the streets of the village on the shoulders of two stout quarrymen, and the whole population gave themselves a holiday and made merry. A large subscription was started, and contributed to handsomely, in order to pay for the hounds and other expenses.

Upon examination, the bitch was found to be branded on the left side with the letter 'P'; so if any of my readers have lost such a dog, they will know what has become of it.

I do not suppose that a more exciting chase was ever witnessed since the old wolf-hunting days.

It may seem strange to many, as it did to me, that foxhounds should chase one of their own breed, but the fact remains that they did so.

G. C. D.



RIDDLES OF LOVE.

CHAPTER XXI.

SHOWING HOW A HEROINE MAY BE SAVED FROM A NERVOUS FEVER.

HAD May Pemberton enjoyed the privileges of most young ladies of her class, in having nothing to do but amuse herself and be admired, she would probably have had a severe attack of illness after her meeting with Halidame at Richmond, and the scene with her father on the terrace. But a great deal of suffering is saved by people having no time to encounter it. Idle persons have always doctors at their doors. Active persons—that is to say, those whose activity is enforced—may feel occasionally that they want medical attendance; but they practically say to the medical attendant, 'Wait a little, my dear sir, I shall have leisure next week, and then you shall investigate about my heart;' or, 'Next week I hope to get a holiday, and then I will have my bilious attack without fail.' In the meantime the symptoms have perhaps disappeared; the comparative leisure or the actual holiday comes, and is enjoyed, and the doctor is forgotten. Look at the case of an army in the field going through a campaign. In the face of the worst privations endured in the worst climates—in India, for instance, during the hot season—the men are exposed, it may be, for months together to perils and to plagues of every kind—to constant strain upon their minds and bodies; and it is found that there are fewer on the sick list than when they are luxuriating in comfortable cantonments. The campaign once over, the wear and tear relaxed, the hardships at an end—they are half of them in hospital. But even then the reaction is not a very serious matter; it is killing only in comparatively few instances; and in civil life, when nothing but healthy occupation has kept off the maladies of the flesh, there is probably no reaction at all.

May Pemberton clearly owed a nervous fever at least to the medical

profession. But she had no time to pay the debt; so the medical profession had to wait. What was she to do? Mrs. Grandison was with her at ten in the morning, reminding her of a rehearsal at twelve which must be attended. Nervous fevers were not to be thought of; and poor May had to cast her cares on one side, and threw herself into the business of the theatre.

And when once that resolve was taken there came real relief. Happy are they who have other people's troubles to attend to instead of their own. A barrister's life would be a burden to him if he had to feel a hundredth part of the anxieties which he represents in court, or even to have a more intimate knowledge of them than he gets from his brief. A doctor whose knowledge is necessarily intimate would scarcely survive the shocks of a short period of practice had he more than a professional interest in the cases committed to his care. An actor who identified himself with his characters in thorough earnest would simply go mad. In either case, apart from professional habit, the healthy action of the profession must be attributed to its engrossing nature, and the separation of the professor from himself. Lawyers, doctors, and actors may die early as other men do; but it is through exceptional causes. Where other things are equal, where they have fair play and plenty of employment, they live longer than any other classes—except perhaps soldiers, who stand by *their* profession, and have escaped the chances of war, and statesmen who pass the greater portion of their lives in warfare of another kind in the House of Commons. Activity may kill sometimes, but then it is activity accompanied by personal anxiety. Activity pursued with professional or political objects usually keeps men

alive. After all, a man seldom feels so acutely the cause of his clients, his patients, or his country, as the cause of himself, when his means of livelihood, his character, and perhaps his honour, are the matters immediately concerned.

You must not suppose, therefore, that May—who had now come under the category of what they call public characters—cared less about her personal troubles than leisurely ladies would have cared under similar conditions. But there was Mrs. Grandison, and there was the rehearsal. Neither could be evaded; and May had her head full of the part which she had to perform. The piece in which she was to make her *début*, I may here mention, was not quite an old one nor quite a new one. It had been produced some years before, when it had not been properly represented or properly put upon the stage. But certain advisers of the management of the Imperial thought it would be especially suited to the powers of the new actress, and I dare say they were in the right. It was a romantic play, abounding in strong situations, and one in which the heroine was a far more important personage than the hero. The heroine had to be maligned and persecuted, but to be tender and true throughout; to have some hard struggles, to make some hard sacrifices, and in the end to be heroic and happy. It was very good business, in fact, as was observed by the literary gentleman who was engaged to revise and re-write the piece as far as might be necessary—the piece being of foreign origin and nobody's property in particular.

All this was highly satisfactory; and the general opinion of those who had seen the rehearsals was, that, unless the actress broke down before the audience, the most splendid success might be anticipated for 'Love and Liberty; or, the Daughter of the Doge.'

May did not feel at all like the daughter of a doge, as she drove to the theatre with Mrs. Grandison; but the effort thus made restored her mind to its proper tone, and at once surrendered to the struggles

of an ideal passion, she thought no more of the real sorrows that ached in her heart.

May enjoyed the rehearsals, though it was some time before she became reconciled to the prosaic appearance of a theatre by daylight—especially behind the scenes. 'What!' said she to Mr. Mandeville, when first initiated into the mysteries, and taken into the painting-room; 'do you mean to say that all those rough old pieces of painting are parts of the new scenery?—that those things can ever be made to look like the Grand Canal, and those to resemble a ball-room in the Doge's palace? I can better fancy that you might make a dungeon in the Inquisition out of the others, because anything will do for a dungeon. And this wretched thing—well, it is shaped like the Rialto certainly, but the public—won't the public hiss? If they do I shall run off the stage.' Mr. Mandeville laughed, and said that she must not run off the stage whatever happened, unless required to do so by the stage directions; and he assured her that the scenery was quite new, even such parts of it as had been used in the 'Merchant of Venice' being repainted, and that it would look beautiful by night. So May was satisfied, and by degrees accepted everything she saw as matters of course, and even regarded with gravity the doge's state banquet laid out in the property room—a Barmecide's feast made up of candellabra and false flowers, with covers and goblets of the very best Dutch metal.

But there was one peculiarity of dramatic life in which May was not quite instructed; and it was only now—at almost her last rehearsal—that she received a suggestion of its nature. She had an idea that people who played together must all be on harmonious terms, and be impelled in their performances only by one object—that of realizing the conceptions of the author to the best of their abilities, and affording to one another the greatest possible assistance. She had, to be sure, been early warned by Mrs. Grandison that she must not make pri-

vate friends of everybody she met at the theatre, as some of them might not be desirable associates, if only from the fact of their different stations in life; and in this respect she was instinctively prudent. But she could not conceive that any of Mr. Mandeville's company could be capable of bearing her any ill-will, especially if what people said should prove true, and she should really render great assistance to the theatre. But some of the ladies, she learned upon this occasion, were unfeminine enough to be jealous. Miss Calderon, for instance, who did not play in the piece—for the reason that Miss Mirabel assumed the part to which she would otherwise be entitled—was, May learned privately from Mrs. Grandison, her enemy for life; and the two or three others who *did* play were not pleased with her prominence, and had no idea of making their characters of more minor importance than was absolutely imperative. Thus Mrs. Valance, a lady with charms rather in arrear, who played a countess of somewhat vicious tendencies, but full of fascinating foibles, was determined, May was warned, to outbid her, if possible, for the applause of the public; while Miss Rosemary, who appeared as a susceptible waiting-woman, and had a great scene with a comic gondolier, on the steps of the Doge's palace while the ball was proceeding within, was suspected of being in league with the gondolier to make the comic business so effective as to spoil the audience for the serious interest that was to follow, when the scene changed to the interior of the festive hall.

These alarming facts were communicated to May during the intervals of rehearsal, and did not make her more pleased with the prospect before her than she had been before. 'But she could not,' she said, 'complain of others doing their best, considering that they had as much right to gain favour with the public as herself.' Mrs. Grandison smiled at this liberal concession, and hoped that Miss Pemberton would not find occasion to alter her views. 'I had

no wish to make you uncomfortable,' she said; 'but I thought it as well, seeing and hearing what I do, to tell you beforehand, so that you might be a little on your guard. Not, however, that you can do anything yourself: if these people interfere with you, I dare say Mr. Mandeville will interfere with them.'

This little hint of rivalry had at least one happy effect—it helped to distract the thoughts of the *débutante* from more personal matters, not only during the drive home, but for the rest of the day.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. MOLE ASSISTS MISS MIRABEL'S FIRST APPEARANCE.

Of the numerous persons interested in the success of 'Love and Liberty; or, the Daughter of the Doge,' the most outwardly anxious perhaps was Mr. Mole, the acting manager of the Imperial Theatre. This gentleman, as his official title denoted, was Mr. Mandeville's deputy, who managed all the executive business for him; for Mr. Mandeville, though he undertook to be his own manager, was too great a man to trouble himself about details, except when his special attention was called to them; and he had never interfered so much as since his engagement with the new actress. The many responsible duties devolving upon Mr. Mandeville in his accumulation of wealth necessitated a secretary, as a matter of course; but this functionary was a very different person from Mr. Mole, and had quite enough to do in the way of correspondence. Moreover, though his business was principally transacted at the theatre, it included a far wider range than the affairs of that speculation. There was Mr. Mandeville's church, for instance, which was fast approaching completion; and Mr. Mandeville was now adding to his other enterprises nothing less than a newspaper. For though, as we have already heard, he had considered at one time that a man might feel settled in life with a church and a theatre of his own, he had recently arrived at the con-

elusion that perfect contentment would not be secured without the addition of a newspaper; and impelled by this idea he had just projected a daily journal. In this, as in other speculations, he showed himself a thorough master of the business in hand. He did not trouble himself in the beginning about writers. These, he said, would come naturally when he was ready for them. Reporters were perhaps a more serious consideration, as there are only a certain number of gentlemen with the special training required for the work, and these are generally engaged. But he had never known, as he remarked, a newspaper to break down for want of reporters; and by paying good prices he had always found that a man had a tolerable command of the market in most things. So his first care was to provide sufficiently spacious office premises—not an easy thing to obtain in the proper quarter—and an extent of machinery which, he declared, must be overwhelming. 'In these days,' said this wise and experienced man, 'we must publish at a penny; and if you publish at a penny you must get an enormous circulation to pay. And to get an enormous circulation you must have an enormous production, and an enormous production cannot be accomplished without enormous machinery; and when you are prepared with the supply, the demand will come as a matter of course, with proper agencies for distribution, if the paper be only decently conducted. If it be something more than decently conducted, the thing will of course bring me in another fortune; and of course I shall provide for this requirement when the preliminary arrangements are complete. For the rest, I am prepared to carry on the paper for three years at a loss with which nobody is prepared to compete—and this is the secret of success in journalism in these days.'

Such were Mr. Mandeville's sentiments in reference to the new enterprise in which he had embarked, and it may be that they proved well founded. But I mention the matter incidentally only, as illustrative of

the great manager's growing command of the public, from the study of whose tastes he had already made so splendid a fortune.

But I have no concern with the newspaper just now. My more special object was to introduce you to Mr. Mole, whose preparations for the appearance of the *débutante* were of no ordinary kind, and indicated the great expectations formed of her in the theatre, and that gentleman's acute appreciation of a dramatic opportunity.

Mr. Mole was a little gentleman with large spectacles. That was the first impression he produced upon the casual observer. But there was a great mind within the little body, and a great deal more was seen from behind the spectacles than from the united optics of a hundred common men. Mr. Mole had such little eyes that the large spectacles might have seemed to strangers an unwarrantable assumption—except that strangers never saw the two apart, and so were not led to make invidious comparisons. And Mr. Mole had, besides, such a little nose that you wondered how the spectacles rested upon it, until you came to the philosophic conclusion that this consideration was the spectacle's business rather than yours, and you decided not to trouble yourself about so ignoble a question. You could not deny, however, that the result of the arrangement illustrated a remarkable amount of mental penetration, and for this Mr. Mole had always been famous in the world where he was known. This was a world quite apart from the worlds pluralized among the public. It was not the world of politics, of literature, of art, of society. It was not the world of officialism or the services. It was not the 'serious' world, of which we have seen Mr. Sharpenal to have so high an opinion—for particular purposes. It was not even the theatrical world as represented before the curtain. It was the world behind the scenes—the most renowned and the most exclusive world of any; the world about which the public to whom it appeals knows so little, notwithstanding the curious

interest to know more which that little seems to create.

Mr. Mole, before he became acting manager at the Imperial Theatre, had gone through most of the phases incidental to the career of an *Entrepreneur*. He had speculated in public performers as men speculate in the public funds, taking his chance of their rise or fall in the same manner, but with a little more difficulty, owing to the exigency of engagements, in the way of selling out. He had never been a manager himself, but he had been the cause of a great deal of management—or mismanagement, as the case might be—in others. He had never been himself on the boards before an audience, except to make a business announcement about somebody else, but he had been the occasion of many actors and actresses appearing in that position; and if anybody could have a more thorough acquaintance with the stage than anybody else, I fancy that person must be Mr. Mole. Of late years he had relaxed in speculations of the kind, and preferred to take what he called 'the certainty' offered to him at the Imperial Theatre. Some people said it was because he had lost money upon his own account; but I suspect that his reason was of a contrary character. Some men consider success a signal to go on; others look upon that condition as a warning to leave off. Mr. Mole, I fancy, was one of the latter kind, who, having made as much as he wanted by speculation, was content to seek the desired superfluity in the safety of a salary.

Mr. Mole took the most tender interest in the success of May, and, among other means towards that end, neglected no opportunity of propitiating the public journals. For this purpose he began by propitiating Mr. Hanger, who was a wonderful medium in that way, and got things into print for other people that other people could never get for themselves. Some of the papers were haughty and would not express opinions in advance; but others were more complaisant, and 'understood' that the new actress was to do all kinds of wonderful things.

I here allude to London. In the provinces, where editors have not so much choice of interesting matter as in the metropolis, and are apt to entertain an abstract reverence for 'copy' of any kind, the praises of May were not only enthusiastic, but diffuse to a most gratifying extent; and the number of 'our own correspondents' who happened to know everything concerning her was among the marvels of the age. Mr. Mole, too, did not omit to distribute free admissions in every influential quarter. Not only the newspapers, but friends present and prospective, were accommodated in this manner, as is usual on first nights, when a piece or a player require support. 'After the first night, and the thing was safe,' as Mr. Mole observed, 'it would be very easy to suspend the free list, and advertise to the public that there was no possibility of making room for them in the theatre—which would be the surest way of bringing them there.'

I mention these matters that my readers may gain some idea of the excitement caused in town by the expected *débutante*, who only a few months before seemed destined to endure Shuttleton for the term of her natural life, and lived so much in retirement as to cherish the impression that to be present at the Mayor's ball was to be committed to the vortex of society.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FIRST NIGHT AT THE IMPERIAL THEATRE.—'LOVE AND LIBERTY OR, THE DAUGHTER OF THE DOGE.'

There was great excitement on the following Saturday, both before and behind the curtain. I mean, of course, at the Imperial Theatre, where Miss Mirabel was to make her first appearance on any stage, in the part of *Bianca*, in the play of 'Love and Liberty; or, the Daughter of the Doge.' They called the piece a 'play' in the bills, to distinguish it from either a tragedy or a comedy, to neither of which class it properly belonged, and to rescue it from the invidious description of 'drama,' which would suggest illegitimacy. But I surely need not explain these

distinctions to the reader, who probably understands them as well as I do myself. My only object in being particular upon the point is to make the fact apparent that May Pemberton was not the heroine of a mere three-act affair, begotten who knows how, but had all the sanction of legality that five acts can afford, and took her place, however experimentally, among the stars of the stage.

There was excitement on both sides of the curtain, but it was of a different kind.

On the one side was hope, mingled with anxiety; on the other was curiosity, mingled with nothing at all.

May felt a grand consciousness of power, which ought to succeed if ever success was deserved; but, on the other hand, she felt a fear of that dreadful public which might misunderstand her—and she was instinctively aware of the peril of being misunderstood. One such mishap might be her ruin—not only for the night but for her whole future career.

May, too, was not encouraged by the attitude of her father at the last moment. He had, as we know, always been averse to his daughter's appearance in public; and now that the time had come, his reluctant acquiescence assumed the form of a sullen assent under protest, which made him as depressing a companion as can well be conceived. However, he accompanied May to the theatre in a brougham which had been engaged upon a weekly tenure from the livery stables, and for the rest, left her under the protection of Mrs. Grandison—who of course played in the piece—and the ministrations of Mrs. Mannering, the ancient mother of Leonora, who had instructions never to leave her mistress when she was off the stage. She was thus in good hands; for Mrs. Grandison was thoroughly sincere in her friendship; and when she meant protection in earnest, did her work in the spirit of a dragon, and effectually warned off impertinent intruders; while Mrs. Mannering was all that the most abject of faithful dependents could possibly be, and when once committed to in-

structions would carry them out to the letter. This respectable old female had proceeded to the theatre in advance, in charge of May's special wardrobe—a gorgeous collection comprising three different costumes, each surpassing the other in richness and effect. Mrs. Grandison had consulted the *débütante* beforehand upon the importance of making the most of the opportunities of the part in this particular. Her own experience was, she said, that so long as there was no absolute incongruity, the more brilliant the toilette the better. It would at least please the eye of the most intellectual portion of the audience; while a very large portion, who did not pretend to be intellectual, would be influenced by it in their estimation of the performer. May, who, though aspiring to be a great artist, was still only a young lady in many respects, had no prejudice against being well dressed; so, submitting herself to the ideas of a certain milliner in Wigmore Street, who professed to work for the Court, she made no objection to any amount of decoration.

The Pembertons arrived at the Imperial an hour earlier than was necessary, in deference to the anxiety of May, who was under the fixed impression, from the first thing in the morning, that she would be too late. It is a dreadful ordeal, a first appearance on any stage. I believe that, as regards the sensation just before the crisis, that of charging a battery to the very mouths of the guns is nothing to it. You may imagine, then, that May was not in the most serene of conditions, and was impatient for the event she most dreaded—the drawing-up of the curtain. The business-like appearance of the preparations in the theatre somewhat reassured her; for people can incur all kinds of dangers in company that they would never face by themselves, and she felt that others, at least, were associated with her in her deed of daring. She made a mistake, however, in supposing, as she did, that she saw 'First appearance on any stage,' visibly depicted upon the countenances of everybody about her.

The excitement which she saw in the faces of the acting-manager, the members of the company, and even the stage carpenters, said simply, 'First night,' and had reference to the piece merely, and to the first appearance only in so far as it was connected with the general object of interest. But May fancied that everybody shared her anxiety, and the fancy was sufficient for the purpose—to say nothing of the encouragement given to her by Mrs. Grandison, who was, of course, an exception to the rest. Mr. Mandeville was in the theatre; but May did not see him before the great event, and was rather relieved to find that he did not emerge from his private room. Mr. Mandeville, as I have mentioned, did not interfere in the stage arrangements, but he made a point of coming down to the theatre, more especially on important occasions, for the sake, as he said, of the moral influence which his presence had upon everybody in his employ.

If it was known that I was not coming, that great man was wont to remark, 'every man and woman would more or less scamp their business.'

So he sat in his room upon the present occasion, looking over some correspondence, and exerting his moral influence with the assistance of a cigar.

There was a little piece before the great one—a *lever de rideau*, occupying no stage room, so that the Grand Canal, which graced the opening of 'Love and Liberty; or, the Daughter of the Doge,' could be prepared without interfering with the London house-front, with arandrailings adorned with powder pots, which formed the flat in 'Jemima's Day Out.' The latter piece was a thorough 'screamer,' by-the-way, turning upon the perplexities of Jemima, a servant-maid, who, on her day out, is not allowed to get much further than the front area, owing to the confusion caused by an excess of lovers—including a policeman, a soldier, and a pot-boy—and the complications arising therefrom.

May did not, as you may suppose,

witness this interesting effort of humour, being sufficiently engaged in her own room. And even when the curtain at last rose upon 'Love and Liberty; or, the Daughter of the Doge,' the moment for which she had waited was still a little way off. For Bianca (Miss Mirabel) had not to appear until nearly the end of the first scene, when, landing from her gondola, which has met with an accident, at a miscellaneous part of the city, she finds herself the unwilling ear-witness to a conference of conspiring nobles, one of whom is her lover, whom she is in the habit of meeting at her father's palace. She is attended by her haughty aunt, the Countess of Carrara (Mrs. Grandison), and the two would meet with inevitable assassination but for the interference of the lover, Count Farina (Mr. Vavasour, a rising *jeune premier*), who persuades Bianca not to tell, and induces her also to induce the haughty aunt to keep the secret. So the secret is kept for a time—owing to Bianca's affection for Farina, and the haughty aunt's affection for Bianca—until it oozes out through some natural channel, and the piece is enabled to proceed.

The house meantime, but feebly occupied during the farce, had filled to the ceiling; and in the boxes and stalls were a great many people we know. The Imperial, by-the-way, is not one of the largest theatres in London, but is of the moderate size most approved in these days, when, if the public have not much dramatic enthusiasm, they at least like to see and hear.

In the stalls the most noticeable person was Colonel Jericho, whom we met the other night at Richmond; and near Colonel Jericho were his friends Colonel Coventry and Captains Bath and Hongkong. I scarcely need mention Captain Tracks, for that young officer goes without saying—that is to say, goes wherever Colonel Jericho goes. In the stalls also were more of the Richmond party—Rupert Harrington, the rich, the handsome, and the haughty, he of the 'blood and culture,' who longed for a literary reputation, but had to pay for the publication of his writings; High-

jinks, the burlesque writer, who looked and talked like a sprite out of one of his own pieces; the genial Hanger, whose gregarious nature brought him to any gathering of the kind as a matter of course; and, last not least, Lord Arthur Penge, who haunted the theatres as only an amateur actor can, and who was getting on himself so well in the art that he had nearly persuaded Mandeville to give him an engagement in his company, and pay him a salary.

In a box on the first tier, near the stage, might be seen the charming Lucy Manton and her husband, to whom presently entered Cecil Halidame, who, however, for reasons in which I suspect certain persons, not unconnected with Curator Street, were concerned, kept in shadow, and seldom showed a bold front to the audience. In the next box was Mangles, the dramatic author, who went to see other people's pieces, I believe, through a morbid curiosity that prevented him from staying away. He certainly did not look as if he were deriving any amusement from the present performance. Opposite to him, in a box by himself, was the celebrated Mr. Swandown, the critic of that potential journal, 'The Epoch,' who ought to have been the hardest man in the world, and was one of the softest, and did his spiriting so gently as to convey the impression that a person of his undoubted critical powers must mean a great deal more than he chose to say. A little farther on, in another box, was the proprietor of another daily and distinguished journal, with a selection from his charming family of daughters, two of whom, by-the-way, might be seen in the stalls, where that gentleman's gentle and judicious critic might also be seen prepared to be pleasantly impartial as to the performance, as was his wont. Scattered about was an editor or two—editors are scarce at theatres—and more critics who need not be further noted, as well as more *littérateurs*, some of whom came late and could not get further than the lobby, where they obtained but a precarious view of the stage,

but had the satisfaction of being able to talk among themselves as much as they pleased. Among the latter were two or three artists, one of whom was bent upon a sketch of the principal scene in the new play—the sensation scene in which *Farina* takes a leap from the top of the doge's palace, after the conspiracy has been discovered at the ball, into a friendly gondola, conducted by the comic gentleman who has the love-scene with Miss Rosemary—for that celebrated pictorial journal the 'Illustrious Age.'

The house, indeed, seemed half occupied by what vulgar people call 'professionals,' and a remark to that effect was made by a tall handsome man—no other than Mr. Windermere, whom I had forgotten to mention—who sat next to Highjinks in the stalls. He did not know the people, by-the-way, until Highjinks told him who they were.

'Surely,' said he, 'if all these great men come in without paying, it is rather an unprofitable arrangement for the management.'

'Ah, but this is only a first night,' explained Highjinks; 'if the piece makes a hit it will fill the house for two or three hundred nights, and we shall soon find the free list suspended—except as regards a few who can't be kept out—and the management will coin money to any extent. Managers use the free list quite as much as the free list use the managers. When a piece flags and they want to keep it upon the stage, they regularly force an audience by means of orders, and are very glad to get people to take them. A manager may well say,'—and here Highjinks burst characteristically into parody—

'Oh, Free List, in our hours of ease,
We may despise thee as we please,
But when blank boxes wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!'

and he added—'A first night comes under the same category. A new piece, or an old piece revived, is always an experiment; and who knows what might become of it if left to an ordinary audience? They don't damn in these days; but they might not know what to do without

help, and would be as likely as not to miss the real points of the play.'

Highjinks, you see, had just the same contempt for the public that has been noticed in other persons who minister to its tastes.

Miss Mirabel—I give her the theatrical name for the sake of propriety—was waiting meanwhile in a condition which threatened to make her pay her debt to the doctors, in the shape of a nervous fever, after all. Her excitement was immense when the curtain drew up—amidst applause from all parts of the house—and discovered Venice by moonlight, with the conspiring nobles in the foreground; and the leap which she was soon to take seemed quite as perilous as that of *Parina* from the top of the doge's palace.

She watched them from the wing—the cloaked and rapièred conspirators—as they talked of the glorious freedom that they meant to secure for the state when its present tyrants were put out of the way, and listened to every word they said as all-important to herself. But for Mrs. Grandison, who waited with her, and took a business-like view of the position, she would perhaps have anticipated affairs and made a premature discovery of the conspiracy. But induced by the more experienced lady, she waited for the practicable gondola, and did not feel half so embarrassed as she had anticipated when they both embarked in that—as seen from the back—rather ridiculous-looking craft.

In another minute May was before the audience and had made her first appearance upon any stage.

She stepped out of the gondola with Mrs. Grandison and stood near the conspiring nobles, as yet unobserved by anybody except the people in front, who saluted her with a storm of applause. For a few moments May saw neither the conspiring nobles, nor the people in front, nor anything at all in fact. All about her seemed in a whirl. The grouped conspirators were like mere shadows, and the circled spectators were a mere mass of light and colour. Where should she turn?

She made a movement to go back to the gondola, but was restrained by a touch from Mrs. Grandison, who, as the haughty aunt, was fortunately enabled to assume this kind of control. So, in the most natural manner in the world, May was brought back to the business of the scene. She advanced and took up her position on the stage, remembered all that she had to do, and waited with something like composure for the first 'cue,' which came from Mrs. Grandison.

In another minute she had passed the Rubicon. She had heard the sound of her own voice—she had heard the plaudits which came from every part of the house—she had spoken, was answered, and had responded—and she had not forgotten what was to come next. She was like an amateur in swimming who feels on a sudden that he is afloat. She felt afloat now on the tide of public favour, and a great inspiration filled her pulses. From that moment she was the mistress of the audience, whom she looked upon as something abstract and removed. She threw herself into her character, and found the business of the scene to come as a matter of course. All terror, all doubt was now at an end, and May moved about the stage and talked her share of the dialogue with as much ease as Mrs. Grandison herself. Nothing could be better than the manner in which she took up her position, and nothing more flattering than its recognition by the audience. So said Mrs. Grandison when they were closed in by the next scene, in which they had fortunately nothing to do.

In front of the house the general opinion fully justified Mrs. Grandison's remark.

'She'll do, by Jove!' said Colonel Jericho, from his stall.

'Nothing more certain than that,' accepted Colonel Bath.

'I'd bet anything upon it,' endorsed Captain Coventry.

'So would I,' backed up Captain Hongkong.

'Yes, she'll do, decidedly,' settled Captain Tracks; 'and what an awfully swell girl!'

'Beautiful!' was the general response along the whole line.

All over the stalls, in fact, there were not two opinions upon either branch of the subject—the talents and the beauty of the new actress. Lord Arthur Penge was loud in laudation. Rupert Harrington was lost in admiration. Highjinks indulged in absurd demonstrations of ecstacy. Windermere was silent in wonderment, and meant more perhaps than anybody. Hanger remarked that he had always said she would be a success—which he had not, but that was no matter.

In the boxes the impression made was the same. Mr. Swansdown was evidently moved to a narrow escape from enthusiasm, and compromised himself to a favourable *critique* by applauding vigorously. Mr. Mangles mentally determined that he would write a piece for the girl at once, and meanwhile he would give her every possible encouragement—for it was whispered that Mangles was a critic as well as a dramatic author, and some people ventured to guess the paper he wrote in. The regular critics were all in a complimentary chorus. In one box the first appearance of the actress produced an unexpected effect.

'Good Heavens!' exclaimed Halidame; 'it cannot be—impossible—give me your glass, Manton, like a good fellow.' Yes, it is indeed—it's May Pemberton.

'It is, it is indeed!' cried Lucy. 'What a surprise! Who would have thought it? Captain Pemberton so proud, too! And how shy of her never to have told us! Yes, and there—there you see is the lady we met with her at Richmond.'

'Yes,' said Halidame. 'I knew Mrs. Grandison at the time, but did not know that she was May's—Miss Pemberton's—companion.'

Manton was not so much surprised as his wife or his friend at the discovery of the identity of Miss Mirabel, or rather he was not so much interested in the fact; but he took a practical view of the occasion, and said that Lucy must ask her to dinner.

In the meantime the play was proceeding.

There was a great scene—a secret interview between Bianca and *Furina*, near a ruin on a lone island by moonlight, where she reproaches him with his treason but cannot withhold her love. The manner in which May rendered this conflict of passion was a splendid piece of acting, and the whole house was roused into real enthusiasm. May was elate with triumph when she came off, and received the congratulations of her friends like a conqueror. The great Mr. Mandeville—who, you may be sure, did not keep in his room all the evening—was especially profuse in his praises, and prophesied for her a glorious career. Even Captain Pemberton, who stayed behind the scenes, not desiring to meet people whom he might know in front of the house, was surprised into genuine admiration, and for the first time in his life, perhaps, felt a real sympathy with art, and forgot his conventional objections to the character of an actress. The congratulations, too, were interrupted no less than three times, when May had to go on to receive the renewed homage of the audience.

I am afraid, however, that everybody behind the scenes was not equally charmed with Miss Mirabel's success. Mrs. Vallance, for instance, attributed it to the presence of friends in the house, influence exerted in the stalls, &c., and, in her character of an enemy and rival, made stronger attempts than were quite legitimate to discomfort the *débutante*. But though others saw exactly what Mrs. Vallance was doing, May was quite unconscious of the fact, so absorbed was she in the character to which she was committed. Miss Rosemary had no opportunity to attempt direct annoyance, but she made the most of the comic love scene with the gondolier, as was expected, and overplayed her part in such a farcical manner that, as Mrs. Grandison remarked to Mr. Mole, 'Miss Rosemary seemed to have quite mistaken her line, and should for the

future play in such pieces as "Jemima's Day Out."

The waiting-maid and the gondolier were certainly a long time about their love-making, and gave to it a character not quite consistent with the dignity of the play; but they made the unreflecting laugh, which was their main object, and did not care a straw if they made the judicious grieve at being kept waiting to know what was going on in the palace while the pair were philandering on the steps. But all things come to an end—even the overplaying of her part by a saucy young actress—and Miss Rosemary had at last to make way for the great scene at the banquet, where the Doge is so nearly drinking the poisoned goblet, and *Farina* is denounced and flies to the roof, before a hundred swords that have leapt from their scabbards at the suggestion of his treason, and *Bianca* is denounced as his accomplice and the enemy of her father and the state.

The injudicious as well as the judicious made common cause in their reception of this series of effects, and poor Miss Rosemary and the comic gondolier were fairly forgotten in the *furor* that followed. Once more May was called to the front, and had to embarrass herself by collecting all the bouquets thrown at her feet, including the little one which upon such occasions always sticks in a foot-light and is not seen till the last moment. Never had May looked more lovely than now. She had, as I have hinted, been wonderfully costumed throughout; but in her ball dress, with its 'gloss of satin and glimmer of pearl,' all white, she looked every inch a Doge's daughter and a great deal more. 'Something between a Doge's daughter and an angel,' said Colonel Jericho, with affected cynicism, from the stalls; but there were many in all parts of the house who applied the description of 'angel' unreservedly.

It was rather sad to see and hear—but the sensation leap from the roof of the palace, in the next scene, brought down quite as much ap-

plause as May's acting in the banquet-hall. But this was a passing aberration on the part of a sanely-appreciating audience. There were even stronger effects to come on the part of May; and the scene between her and her lover in the dungeon of the State Inquisition, and the unexpected expression, to the State Inquisitors, of her belief in his innocence, was another great triumph. And when she is able to prove the truth of her position, and to denounce the real evil-doers—who are apparently reputable people, and include the coquettish countess played by Mrs. Vallance—May was more triumphant than ever; and when *Farina* is released and received with honours, and the Doge gives her to him as his bride, she is even more triumphant than before.

It is of no use going on with a play after such a crisis as this; so 'Love and Liberty' or, the Daughter of the Doge,' here came to a conclusion; and the plaudits at the end were, if possible, more enthusiastic than they had been during the progress of the piece. There was a perfect avalanche of bouquets this time, and May was so embarrassed with her burden that the little one in the footlight was nearly being neglected altogether. But May returned for it in time, and this very natural movement was made a pretext for another round, in the midst of which the actress effected her escape behind the curtain.

When Mr. Mole announced that the play would be repeated every evening until further notice there was a concluding burst of applause; and if that worthy gentleman had made an amendment upon the conditional form, and for the words 'until further notice' substituted the words 'for ever,' nobody would have been astonished, and some jocular enthusiast in the pit would probably have moved a rider providing for the addition of 'and a day.'

In fact, as you see, there never was such a success upon the British stage as that of Miss Mirabel as *Bianca*, in 'Love and Liberty' or, the Daughter of the Doge.'



Drawn by Adelaide Claxton.]

MAV'S TRIUMPH.

[See 'Riddles of Love,' Chapter XXIII.]

THE HOLIDAY NUMBER

Published by the American Association of University Professors

Washington, D. C.

1914

Volume 1, Number 1

Published by the American Association of University Professors

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CHAPTER XXIV.

SUPPER AT THE SHERIDAN.—LOVE IN A CLUB.

The private opinion expressed by our friends in the stalls and boxes, at the conclusion of the performance, was as unequivocal as the public display; but they did not wait long to talk in the lobbies. The men for the most part went away to clubs. Windermere seemed uncertain as to his destination, and Highjinks helped him out of his difficulty.

'Don't go to that hole in St. James's Square,' said he, alluding irreverently to an establishment of a service character to which Windermere belonged. 'Come with me to the Sheridan—a much better place for supper, and where you will meet half the men who have been here.'

Highjinks meant by 'the men,' himself and a score or so of his intimate friends.

Windermere, in an absent manner, assented, and the two were two minutes afterwards bowling off in a hansom to the club in question, which was rather out of the usual club neighbourhood, being on the wrong side of Charing Cross, and not a hundred miles from Covent Garden.

The Sheridan occupied a house which did not look much like a club. It was outwardly undistinguished from its neighbours by architectural pretensions; and the interior was remarkable rather for comfort than splendour. It was a kind of club that, as its members said, 'had no nonsense about it.' There was something of the 'rough and tumble' character in its arrangements, and on that account it was one of the most exclusive in London. The amount of blackballing there was something horrible; and it was frequently necessary, as Highjinks explained, 'because fellows here do as they like, and they can't do as they like if they are afraid of one another.' So nobody was let into the Sheridan unless he seemed likely to prove a congenial spirit and was well backed up. The members had no objection to a man being a

swell, but it was held that he must be something more than a mere swell to belong to the Sheridan; and any man of rank or high position who did not 'waive a something of his claim' in favour of pleasant companionship was considered a bore and treated accordingly. Nobody went into the club for the sake of any social distinction that it might bring them. 'They must get that before they come here,' said Highjinks, in the course of his explanation of the character of the club to Windermere, 'and when they are here they must not brag about it.' Accordingly the members of the Sheridan, whether idle men or busy men—whether literary, or military, or dramatic, or legal, or what not—were expected to have a common bond of union—that of being sociable and interested in the arts. Such at least was the idea of the institution; but, as is sure to happen in such a case, there were discordant elements at work. Some men forgot the common ground, and wanted to keep as much as possible to a class. One set thought the literary element should prevail; another were in favour of giving that honour to the dramatic element; a third were for a mingling of the two, and objected to what they called outsiders. The 'outsiders' also had a set of their own; and the latter, it was stoutly contended by enthusiastic men who had belonged to the place from the first, 'wanted to destroy the character of the club.' Moderate men, who belonged as much to one class as another, ridiculed all these sensibilities, and were quite content to take the Sheridan as they found it—as a common ground where men of different pursuits, or no pursuits at all, might meet with more freedom than elsewhere, and preferred so to meet, as was proved by the fact that half the members of the Sheridan belonged to the best clubs in London, for the usual reasons that make men belong to the best clubs in London, but went most often to the Sheridan for the best of all reasons—because they liked it. The great attraction of the Sheridan—the congeniality of its members taken for

granted—seemed to lie in the fact it was all smoking-room. Not that members smoked in every part of the house—though there was very little restriction in this respect, but the *tone* of the smoking-room prevailed everywhere at the Sheridan, and at any time in the day. I am not sure that this was quite desirable from a family point of view; but this point of view is not that by which the Sheridan should be judged. It was quite as harmless in its diversions as other clubs, only a little more candid.

But why bore the reader with the peculiarities of the Sheridan? Our business—or rather our pleasure—lies with the company there assembled on the evening in question. It was a large one, as it was sure to be after a new play at any of the theatres, and included most of the 'elements' which were supposed by austere members, inspired by traditions of the foundation, to conflict—but which did not conflict at all for social purposes.

In the supper-room—the great resort at that time of night—the majority of the men were of course taking supper, and this they took principally at one common table, while they talked with the freedom that comes from the consciousness that there are no listeners—in the invidious sense of the term—no *répétiteurs*, in fact, who would retail the conversation elsewhere, or would look upon it from a severe elevation, or go out of their way in any other manner to make themselves disagreeable.

And the conversation? Well, it was not all brilliant, and still less all profound; and I would not venture to describe it by illustration in a general way. But it was hearty, genial, and decidedly gay; and what more would you have at a supper after the theatre?

Highjinks soon made Windermere free of the place—that is to say, he introduced him to half a dozen men sitting near them, and told him that he need not mind talking to anybody, introductions being unnecessary at the Sheridan, where everybody was supposed to know everybody else. But Windermere

somehow was not disposed to talk. He was one of the best-humoured fellows going; but for reasons known to himself—or not known, as the case might be—he was abstracted, and by no means up to the Sheridan mark. In vain did Highjinks try to draw him out; the thing could not be done, so Highjinks tempered his own natural vivacity and became by degrees almost as dull as his guest.

I have said that the conversation was genial and gay. Perhaps I was too general in my description. There must be light and shade in painting, and analogous differences in music, to make harmony in either case; and the same condition applies to conversation, where the main difference required is difference of opinion—to the extent at least of qualification. This is an essential, otherwise conversation would stop like a play in which the father gave away the disputed daughter at the beginning instead of at the end.

There was difference of opinion expressed upon this occasion in reference to most of the subjects discussed, as must happen where there are two or three persons who are determined not to agree with anybody else. There were always some of these to be found at the Sheridan, and notable among them to-night was Wilmington Eaglet, that young Satanic poet who was found gibbering on the jetty after the dinner at the Star and Garter. He had not since been in public until his appearance at the theatre, and was now pleasantly congratulated upon his appreciation of Mr. Mandeville's hospitality—the general opinion being that however many Richmonds there might have been in the field, he had certainly seen two of them. Not, however, that Mr. Eaglet was sensitive about small jests of the kind. A poet—he always spoke of himself abstractedly as a poet—was, he considered, privileged beyond common men, and nothing that he could do, except write bad poetry, ought in his opinion to be a subject for reproach. He allowed himself a great deal of latitude in many respects, indeed, and lived up to his allowance in a thoroughly liberal spirit.

But in matters of dispute he was seldom personally offensive; for he never condescended to small subjects, but confined his attacks for the most part to great works which some of the Sheridans had not read, and great men who were certainly not present, and whose defence was never seriously undertaken except by a few late lingerers—to whom, by-the-way, Eaglet always gave a fair chance, being late enough himself for the purpose. But just now, between the men who did not care to argue with him, and the men who did not know how—for to some he was entirely unintelligible—he was having nearly all the talk to himself. And what was more, he showed every symptom of going on; for he was discussing champagne and seltzer with characteristic copiousness, and growing neglect of the weaker fluid; and the manner in which he could abuse books and men under these conditions was a charming study for his friends.

Among those to whom he was utterly incomprehensible was Mr. Patterson, the celebrated low comedian, who was trying to take a tranquil supper after his exertions in the part of *Slasher*—in 'Slasher versus Clatter'—while talking *coulisses* in a low tone with Colonel Jericho.

'If he goes on I shall go off,' said Mr. Patterson, 'and see how the Stargazers are looking.'

The Stargazers was not, as might be supposed, a society for the study of astronomy, but a set of men who met on certain nights of the week at a neighbouring hotel with convivial objects.

Colonel Jericho, who, unlike Mr. Patterson, got a glimpse of meaning out of Mr. Eaglet's conversation, did not like it any the better on that account, and said he should be happy to go to the Stargazers also if he could be taken—he was not himself a member.

Mr. Patterson promised to introduce him, and hastened to bring his supper to a conclusion preparatory to departure, when a turn was given to the proceedings by the appearance of an addition to the party.

'This is like relief coming to a

besieged garrison on the point of starvation,' whispered Highjinks to Windermere; 'here are a couple of men who will never let anybody be more conspicuous than themselves if they can help it. I like, too, to see Dulcimer and Eaglet in the same room, because then I know one of them will go.'

'Why go?—and who is Dulcimer?' asked his friend, not, however, apparently much interested in either inquiry.

'Why, because they are dead cuts, and will not stay in the same room together. Who's Dulcimer? Don't you know the name of Dulcimer Larkall? He writes novels and poetry and all sorts of things. But though his poetry is poetic he does not call himself a poet, and never writes verse—nor prose, indeed—in earnest; so he has a great advantage over Eaglet, having the best possible temper, while Eaglet has none at all. I said that when they met in the same room one of them always went away, but it's nearly always Eaglet. He's going now, you see.'

And sure enough, as soon as Eaglet saw Mr. Dulcimer Larkall enter, he rose from the table, and in as defiant and insulting a manner as he could assume towards the obnoxious individual, marched out of the room.

When he had departed there was, by general consent, a slight demonstration of applause, which, it is to be hoped, did not reach the ears of the poet, who could scarcely have reached the bottom of the stairs at the time.

Mr. Dulcimer Larkhall laughed a loud, careless laugh, and strode to the table in a piratical manner, ordering the waiter to take away Mr. Eaglet's champagne and seltzer bottles with the air of having captured a fort, and intending to make a clean sweep of the garrison. He was a tall, broad, bold, handsome, fair-haired man, and contrasted curiously with his companion, a small, agile-looking person, with black, twinkling eyes, and an expression of face principally remarkable for acuteness. As if to make up for Mr. Eaglet's absence, they both began to talk together, one being about

as off-hand in his ways as the other, which is saying a great deal.

'Who is the little man?' asked Windermere of Highjinks, rather amused at the aggressive manners of the pair.

'The little man,' replied Highjinks, 'is a great man in his own estimation. He is Mr. Plantagenet Badger, of journalistic fame. At present he is engaged, conjointly with Dulcimer Larkhall, in the editorship of "The Swell." You have heard of "The Swell," surely?'

'Yes—take it in—good deal of it very clever—some of it awful stuff. But I thought it was all written by dukes and marquises. There is certainly not an article in it that seems to come from anybody under the rank of a baronet; and every man writes as if he had at least ten thousand a year, and would not recognize people with only five thousand. And the writers seem to take it for granted that their readers have the same rank and riches.'

'Ah! that's their fun. They once had a contribution from an Honourable, I believe. It wasn't bad, but the Honourable wouldn't go on, or rather could not be depended upon when wanted; so it was found easier for Dulcimer and Plantagenet to do the work themselves, which they do with a few contributions from a set of men going about who write for everything. Perhaps it's the latter who write the rubbish.'

Meanwhile Messrs. Larkhall and Badger were disporting themselves with an easiness that some of the men found hard to bear, though they preferred it to the arbitrary dictation of Mr. Eaglet. The new comers at least made themselves at home with the society; and one sign of the change was that Colonel Jericho and Mr. Patterson did not go over to the Stargazers. But Dulcimer and Plantagenet—I love, like Mr. Highjinks, to call them by their more imposing names—could not go on talking very long without offending somebody's susceptibilities; and the occasion was not long in coming.

'Has anybody seen the new actress to-night?' asked Dulcimer,

with the air of a commanding officer addressing his regiment in a hollow square—Dulcimer's assurance was delightful. A few men of the many who had seen the actress assured him of the fact on their own parts, and the conversation again turned upon Miss Mirabel. Loud praises were heard on all sides, and then came the turn of the two or three gentlemen who never agreed with anybody. One of them—a severely intellectual-looking person, with his hair brushed off his forehead, to make it apparent that he had brains—listened to the commendation with a satirical smile, and then declared his own opinion that Miss Mirabel was, without reservation, the very worst actress that had ever appeared on the British stage.

The majority of the men only laughed at this. It was only Carpingford's way, they said—he did not mean it.

But Mr. Carpingford did mean it, he insisted; and, by way of proving his position, he treated them, or attempted to treat them, to the aesthetic grounds upon which he formed his opinion. I say attempted, because he was not allowed to say very much, being continually interrupted by clamour. His objections, however, seemed really to resolve themselves into the fact that Miss Mirabel was not Mrs. Siddons; and Carpingford, who claimed to have heard the latter lady upon one occasion, would never admit that there had been a real actress on the stage since her time. He planted himself always, in his views of the drama, upon the traditions of the 'palmy days' when people were supposed to have waited at the pit-door of Drury Lane from two o'clock in the day, and dictated public opinion from their places when they arrived inside—a period with which he could not have been familiar except as a very small boy. But Carpingford, whether the drama, or literature, or politics were concerned, took his stand upon the *antiquas vias* with such pertinacity as to proclaim 'no thoroughfare' to passengers not proceeding in his direction.

Carpington had a subaltern—every man of any intellectual calibre

has a subaltern—who supported him in all he said. But Crawlinton was not received at the club with even the same consideration as Carpingford; for Carpingford's opinions were at least his own. Crawlinton was a younger man, and a mild edition of Carpingford in point of appearance; and he was a person of such abject instincts in the way of opinions, that people wondered how he ever got into the club. But all sorts of people get into all sorts of clubs by accident, when the black-balling element happens to fall short; and so Crawlinton happened to get into the Sheridan.

'I only wish he had to put up here again,' said Dulcimer, aside, to Plantagenet; 'wouldn't some of us keep him out? One can stand Carpingford's nonsense because we know he's in earnest; but when this fellow backs him up I feel very much inclined to make short work of him.'

This was quite an unprejudiced opinion on the part of Dulcimer, who knew nothing of the new actress; but as for blackballing Crawlinton if he were put up again, the idea was no novelty at the Sheridan, as regarded any member. For it was frequently said that if the entire club, intimate associates, and in many cases intimate friends, as its members were, was put up for re-election by ballot, scarcely half a dozen of the number would gain re-admission.

Crawlinton, as you see, did not carry weight in the club, and when he ventured to reinforce Carpingford's censure of Miss Mirabel, he experienced not only the usual neglect which attended his reflected opinions, but heard somebody saying to him, in a very clear and decided voice—

'And pray, sir, what do you know about it?'

The voice was that of Windermere, who was growing angry at the hostile criticism of Carpingford, but saw that he had no right to quarrel with a man for what seemed an honest opinion; and so he vented his wrath upon the subaltern, whose

advocacy he instinctively appreciated.

Mr. Crawlinton was not accustomed to be challenged in such a manner; for the members of the Sheridan took him for granted, and took very little notice of him beyond that concession; so he looked confused and particularly uncomfortable, and said something about having a right to his own opinion—looking at Carpingford at the same time as if for protection. Windermere was not appeased at the rejoinder, and was about to pursue the attack—which was quite unjustifiable, by-the-way, and especially so considering that Windermere was present in the character of a guest—when Highjinks interposed, and recalled him to a sense of the proprieties.

There was an awkward pause, and then Mr. Plantagenet Badger thought he would make things pleasant—the result being, as was the frequent fate of this gentleman's attempts in that direction, that he made things precisely the reverse. He had an easy way of designating people in a familiar manner, ladies in particular, and he did so now in the case of Miss Mirabel, whose professional claims he thought fit to espouse.

'I have not seen Mary on the stage,' he remarked; 'but I have seen her off it, and would swear till all's blue that she's a beautiful girl; and I am quite prepared to believe what Mandeville told me, that she will make a splendid actress. Have you heard, by-the-by, that Mary is married, but has run away from her husband?'

There was 'Oh, oh!' at this from a dozen voices; and a chorus of 'Come, come, Plantagenet, don't begin to scandalize here—keep that for the "Swell." And then somebody asked, with a *bonâ fide* desire for information, 'Is her name Mary?—There is no Christian name given in the bills.'

'Not that I am aware of,' was the careless answer; 'but most girls are named Mary, or used to be, so I give her the benefit of the chance. If I have called her by the wrong name you must blame Man-

deville, who should have told us the right one.'

Mr. Badger's friends were not surprised at this little piece of playfulness on the part of a gentleman who thought nothing of speaking of a royal princess as 'Polly.' But one of the persons did not take the joke. This was Windermere, as you may suppose. He rose angrily, and Highjinks, fearing a 'scene,' endeavoured to make him resume his seat.

'Nonsense, man,' said Windermere. 'I know I am your guest, and the guest of the club—but I won't stay—there is no occasion for me to take you with me—and before I go I wish to let this gentleman know that I am leaving on account of his impertinence.'

'By Jove!' remarked Colonel Jericho, 'if we all went away on account of that we might hold our meetings in a sentry-box. But you are clearly in the wrong, Badger. You are not justified in talking of a young lady in the way you have done, even though she happens to be on the stage; and if this gentleman—our visitor, remember—is a friend of hers—'

'Is he a friend?' interrupted Badger; 'if so I am of course very sorry to have talked such nonsense.'

But Windermere was obliged to own that he had not the honour of being a friend of Miss Mirabel's—an admission which induced the rejoinder from Badger of 'Well, in that case I have a right to talk nonsense about the lady if I please, and don't see that this gentleman has a right to interfere.'

This made Windermere more angry, and a 'scene' of a lively character seemed impending. The majority of the men, however, notwithstanding the weakened position of the visitor, gave him their support, and bullied Badger so effectually that he was induced to apologise, and not only withdraw the 'Mary,' but admit that the story about the matrimonial relations of the lady was one to which he attached no kind of credence, as he had heard it from a man who was the worst possible authority in Lon-

don. So Windermere was obliged to be satisfied, and the 'scene' was laughed off. But Windermere was ill at ease, and left soon after with his friend.

When they were in the street Highjinks remarked—

'Come, confess, my boy, you made a mistake in interfering. What Plantagenet said was in awfully bad taste, but *you* had no authority to be Miss Mirabel's champion, and strangers were not to know the state of your feelings, which I of course found out before you left the theatre.'

Windermere did not care to justify his conduct, and noticed only the last words.

'Good heaven!' he exclaimed, 'I have betrayed myself. Well, I will confess to you as my friend, and one in whose honour I can confide, that from the first moment I beheld Miss Mirabel—'

And here Windermere, making a pause upon the pavement—happily deserted by this time—launched into such a strain of eulogy in reference to the young lady in question as will scarcely bear repeating. What he said would simply sound ridiculous to any person not possessed by the same inspiration. There is a certain occupied state of the heart which will not allow of literal accuracy in the description of its tenant, and avowals made under such conditions are ill calculated to bear the ordeal of acute criticism. In more direct terms, it may be said that a man who is in love is very apt, when let loose upon the subject, to say things which convey the impression that he is a donkey; and even if he be a donkey, as sometimes happens, there is no need to make all the world acquainted with the fact.

Highjinks, who was the soul of good-nature, listened to Windermere's confidences in a kindly and sympathising spirit, and went out of his way in more senses than one to do so; for he walked with his friend all the way to Mount Street, Grosvenor Square, whereas his own chambers—as became a writer of burlesques—were in the Temple.



STUDIES FROM LIFE AT THE COURT OF ST. JAMES'S.
LADY FEODORE WELLESLEY.

Drawn by the late George H. Thomas. Engraved by William L. Thomas.

ON THE FRENCH STAGE.

II.

THE theatres of Paris are subjected to an impost from which our own playhouses are free. There exists in that capital an institution, called the *Assistance Publique*, which is very wealthy in respect both to income, cash, and landed property. Indeed it need be so; for it relieves the poor of the metropolis, maintains hospitals—many in the country as well as in town—besides accomplishing other good works. Thus, at Berck, a seaside village not far from Montreuil-sur-Mer, there is a hospital for the reception of scrofulous children, entirely supported by the *Assistance Publique*. Its outlay, therefore, is enormous; and so also is its revenue.

Now, one of the items of its income is, the tenth part of the gross receipts of all the theatres in Paris. Every night, every theatre, great or small, lyrical or dramatic, farcical or spectacular, is obliged to set aside the tenth part of the money taken, to swell the funds of the *Assistance Publique*. It may be imagined that this heavy exaction has given rise to no little grumbling. M. Jules Claretie complains of it in his '*Vie Moderne au Théâtre*,' to whose interesting pages we again recur. Now that there is free trade in theatres—although there is not free-trade in dramatic literature; the mason may build the theatre as he likes, but the author may not construct his piece as he wills, or at least not have it played as he constructed it—why not suppress this impost, which is commonly known as the *droit des pauvres*, 'the rightful share of the poor?' It is a direct tax on the managers, who are not always rich; and on the poor themselves, who go to the play like everybody else. If the opening of a theatre is as much a commercial enterprise as other trades are, why continue this tax, which compels the manager to raise, by the same amount, the price of places, which are his merchandise? For a long time past the theatre has ceased to be regarded as

a culpable and wicked trade, and can well dispense with the imposition of this *denier de rachat*, or 'penny of redemption,' formerly laid upon it by the Church, 'because it drew away the people from divine service, and thereby diminished the amount of almsgiving.' This right, now enjoyed by the hospitals, is quite a feature of the middle ages. It is a veritable vassalage which the Revolution had abolished, and which has been re-established, like so many other things.

For a long while the price of a place in the pit of the Comédie-Française was forty-four sous. Why forty-four, and not the round number forty? Because the right to the tenth of the gross receipts accorded to the *Assistance Publique* plainly forced the theatre to raise its prices by a tenth. It is evident that if the hospitals thus get a million (of francs) per annum out of the theatres (and they receive more than that—nearly two), it absolutely comes out of the public's pocket. 'Charity,' says M. Claretie, 'is a good and admirable thing, but I should not be sorry (and many people think as I do) to practise my liberalities myself.'

He here hits the nail on the head. For then comes the question, 'What would become of the hospitals and the poor if they were dependent on the spontaneous liberalities thus offered?' The probability is that the one would soon be closed, and the other starved. France is not a land of establishments or enterprises supported by voluntary contributions. In all those kind of things, not only must the initiative be taken by some authority, but some authority must keep them going. The French themselves avow this weakness, and occasionally make fruitless attempts to get over it. They expect useful and charitable institutions to be provided for them by the State, as children expect their daily meals from their parents' hands. The French people will

subscribe to little which does not promise to pay a handsome dividend. Thus, poor M. Gustave Lambert (in all probability luckily for him and his crew) cannot fit out his expedition to go and take possession of the North Pole in the name of France, for want of a miserable hundred thousand francs (4000*l.*), which would be raised in London in a day, if he and his scheme found favour in the eyes of Londoners. Whereas, although M. Lambert has been lecturing for months all over the country, encouraged by savants and supported by the press, the francs won't come in, and he strives in vain to start on his arctic voyage and get frozen to death. At the commencement of this very year (1870), an attempt was made to relieve the theatres of their payments to the *Assistance Publique*; but the legislature, fearing the consequences, negatived the application. To us it seems a curious and paradoxical contradiction to subsidise a theatre, like the Français and others, with the public money, and then to tax their receipts for the support of public charities.

There is another special impost which calls for reform; namely, the impost of privileged boxes and administrative free admissions. Certain boxes in the Théâtre-Français, which ought to bring in something like thirty thousand francs (1200*l.*) a year, are absolutely unproductive. The evil would be less if the persons to whom they 'belong' always made a point of occupying them themselves. But how often is the box of a Minister of State crowded with strange-looking spectators, whom one cannot suppose to have very close connections with the governing body. Some of these boxes are *personal*; and the abuse is so deeply rooted that it will require great efforts to prevent its remaining eternal. Thus, after the *Coup d'Etat*, M. de Morny, on whom almost everything depended, exonerated the Comédie-Française from the payment of their yearly rent. In testimony of their gratitude to the all-powerful minister, the comedians then agreed to offer him a box, or a *baignoire*, for life.

M. de Morny accepted, and the *baignoire* was his, as long as he lived. But at his death a difficulty arose. The President of the Corps Législatif very naturally claimed M. de Morny's box; and they had all the trouble in the world to explain that the *baignoire* was (in administrative phrase) personally the count's—or the duke's—and not by any means intended for all future Presidents of the Corps Législatif in *secula seculorum*.

The Théâtre-Français and the Comédie-Française are one; but the former term is more applicable to the present building, the latter to the institution, the company, the society, which is a body of artists of tolerably long standing. It was Voltaire who enfranchised the theatre, and the actors themselves, from all kinds of servitude. To him they owe the destruction of the absurd prejudice which banished them from society. Compare the theatre in 1718, when he started with his 'Odipe,' with the theatre in 1778, when he died.

In the Rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie, nearly opposite the Café Procope, may be still seen a tall house whose façade, in 1718, was that of the Comédie-Française. The Tragic Muse lodged there at the bottom of a yard, in an old tennis-court. A very poor theatre was that! An ill-swept pit, almost muddy, without seats or benches, where the small folk (Shakespeare's groundlings) stood and stared with wondering eyes at the tasteless scenery on the stage; which stage was crowded throughout the whole of its length by *élegants*, strutting about, chatting, laughing, spitting, and interrupting the actors at every instant. And what wretched actors, pompons in their declamation, yet bowing low before the *roués* who thus took the boards by storm, but making the unhappy authors, in revenge, pay dearly for their humiliations. See Le Sage's chapter on comedians in 'Gil Blas.'

Sixty years afterwards the reform was complete. No more fashionable idlers on the stage; the actors playing naturally, and not absurdly costumed—not, as formerly, dress-

ing Greek and Roman parts with feathers in their hats; the actresses interpreting their tragic parts without hoops; the scenery renewed; the stage filled, not by the one single confidant, but by groups of people—by groups, a thing unknown on the French stage!—and the Comédie itself, quitting the tennis-court and the house in the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain, and transported to the Tuileries, into the heart of the king's palace, into the machine-room, where fourteen years later the Convention will sit.

Voltaire, by thus elevating and purifying the theatre, by transforming the boards into a tribune, restored comedians to their proper place, at the same time that he reformed Comedy. The crowd no longer considered the interpreters of Voltaire's dramatic works as mere buffoons. His theatre was not an emotion-shop, but a school of philosophy in which the actors were the teachers. And what feverish excitement there was in those Voltairian tragedies! What a striking thing (even in the narrow point of view of dramatic skill) is the fourth act of 'Rome Sauvée,' in which Voltaire, forestalling and outdoing the innovations of the romancists, puts the whole Roman Senate in their costume on the stage, grouped around the tribune from which Cicero was about to speak! It was a new manifestation of dramatic art. It was a revolution in the theatre made by Voltaire; nay, even more than that, it was the Revolutionary Theatre which he invented.

It is an error to suppose that he completely despised Shakespeare, at the same time that he borrowed from his works. Voltaire fully admits Shakespeare's genius. Even while speaking of his defects (in the 'Dictionnaire Philosophique'), he classes him, in his admiration, by the side of Newton and Frederick II. Now, for Voltaire, Newton was what is most sublime in human nature. The truth is that Voltaire has translated and copied very little indeed from Shakespeare. No works are so personal, so thoroughly French as his. There is something of the Roman in Corneille; of the

Athenian in Racine; Voltaire was French to the backbone. Hence his enormous influence on his time.

Hamlet, as now performing at the Grand Opera, is no more Shakespeare, than Rossini's 'Otello,' or Bellini's 'I Montecchi ed i Capuletti' are Shakespeare; but serious translations and adaptations of Shakespeare have found favour in Parisian theatres. One of the most recent is 'Hamlet,' at the Gaité, with Madame Judith as the Prince of Denmark. We may call this a highly successful reading, rather than an actual impersonation; for the fact is that the assumption by a woman of a male *dramatis persona* completely destroys all illusion. The reality (often not stern) is too self-evident. The interest taken by the public in such exhibitions is anything but purely dramatic. 'Breeches parts'—as they used to be called in green-room slang—are mostly pretexts for the display of pretty feet and legs. They are accorded conventionally, in opera, to the fair possessors of contralto voices; but nobody ever accepted Albani in imagination, while singing her famous Brindisi, for Lucretia Borgia's son. Apart from the inevitable drawback of incongruous sex, Madame Judith, who made a great impression, played the part as few men could play it.

Whether the Parisian public is more uncertain than other publics in its likes and dislikes would be hard to say; but playgoers remember that, whereas Madame Judith could find a great theatre in which to recite a Shakesperian character with applause, Rouvière (since dead, and now admitted to have been a great artist), who interpreted Hamlet, not only with talent, but, at certain points, with genius, was ridiculed, criticised, and, worst of all, treated with implacable indifference. Poor fellow! To play his Hamlet, he was obliged to betake himself to little theatres, at Belleville or the Beaumarchais, surrounded by wretched actors and figurants, who grinned and understood nothing of the demon by whom he was possessed. He was almost mad with the passion for his art.

He would discourse eloquently of the under-currents concealed in certain 'parts,' and of the far-reaching scope of master-pieces like Hamlet. But the theatre did not find him bread; he lived by painting and selling pictures of very inferior merit. That was his *trade*, while his ambition was Art. His whole thoughts and wishes were devoted to being *understood* as an actor, and that in Hamlet. But how many readers, spectators, and thinkers can say that they quite understand Hamlet to their own satisfaction? Not a few take it as they find it, without troubling their heads further about it.

Appropos to Hamlet, M. Alexandre Dumas, sen., has tried to prove that his *dénouement* of the tragedy—that performed at the Théâtre-Historique—was better and much more logical and philosophical, more dramatic than Shakespeare's. What could that Englishman be thinking about? Why didn't he take lessons of the author of 'Antony?' This is how M. Dumas makes the play finish. After the duel between Laertes and Hamlet, the prince, striking the king, forces him at the same time to drink the poison, when the ghost of his murdered father suddenly appears, and stepping up to each of the personages of the drama, sentences them to an irrevocable doom. 'Laertes, pray and die!' says the royal shade to Ophelia's brother. 'To the queen, 'Gertrude, hope and die!' To the guilty king, 'Despair and die!' When Hamlet, trembling, remains alone with the spectre, he asks, in terror,

'Father, what punishment awaits me?
'Live!'

It was in this way that poor Rouvière had to play Hamlet seven or eight years ago. Respecting that *dénouement*, M. Claretie remarks that, to condemn Hamlet to live, is absolute nonsense. Hamlet was not born a *liver*. He is a creature who must necessarily sink under the weight of sorrow. His feigned madness is too much for his nerves. His constitution is weakly; he is an invalid. Crushed by the terrible task he has to accomplish, he neces-

sarily disappears as soon as it is done. Whatever Alexandre Dumas the Elder may say, we cannot conceive Hamlet reigning, wearing a crown on his head, with Horatio for prime minister. It is not the sceptre, but Yorick's skull, which finds its proper place in that feeble hand. M. Dumas, therefore, will permit us to prefer to *his* version the eloquent and respectful translation published by M. Paul Meurice. His Hamlet is Shakespeare's Hamlet, translated as a labour of love.

M. Claretie has an observation which is new. Victor Hugo is often reproached with intruding himself personally into his dramas, with speaking in the place of his personages, with coming forward, he the poet, here under the doublet of Charles-Quint, there under the cloak of Triboulet. In any case, he has to bear the reproach in very good company. It may be addressed to Shakespeare with equal justice. What, in fact, is the famous soliloquy, 'To be, or not to be,' but a private thought, a personal reverie of Shakespeare, put into Hamlet's lips?

Hamlet asks himself whether there are not dreams in the last sleep; whether, in that undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns, there is not something after death. But, in truth, he, Hamlet, has no right to entertain the slightest doubt about the matter, since he has conversed with the ghost face to face. Whether the spectre be a spirit of health or a goblin damn'd, whether he bring with him airs from heaven or blasts from hell, is of no consequence whatever; the ghost exists, its voice has been heard, it has been *seen*, doomed for a certain time to walk the night. Why then does he talk of 'perchance to dream! Ay, there's the rub.' Rabellais's grand *peut-être* is for him a reality, and the young man ought certainly not to hesitate. But, at that moment, it is not he who speaks, but Shakespeare. It is not Hamlet, who, while meditating on death, pauses in the dread of something after death, and consents to bear the ills he has

rather than fly to others that he knows not of. It is the poet himself; and Hamlet's soliloquy is nothing but a wail of mental agony escaped from Shakespeare. There are also passages in the 'Tempest' which are open to the same remark.

King Lear, at the Odéon, imitated in verse by M. Jules Lacroix, was also a Shakesperian success in Paris. The same gentleman had also made a scrupulous translation of Macbeth, and not an adaptation. Lear is the eternal drama of family affections, rivalries, and crimes. Never did tragic poet carry horror to such a pitch as this. The antique fatality, put on the stage by Sophocles, had not the same savage and sinister character. Œdipus, blind, abandoned by his sons, dies calm and majestic, leaning on his daughters' shoulders. At the point of death he blesses them and touches them with his trembling hands. Lear, after suffering like Œdipus, has a far more agonising and miserable end. He is not resigned, but dies protesting. His last sigh is not, like Œdipus's, a prayer, but a malediction. His Antigone, namely Cordelia, is not beside him, living, devoted; she is in his arms, breathless, dead.

The murder of Cordelia is a supreme atrocity which brings this terrible play to a most distressing end. Such a *dénouement* has appeared so frightful to some, that that they have felt obliged to correct and soften it. In the time of Charles II., when so many old pieces were remodelled, there was a strong desire that the life of Lear's innocent daughter should be saved. Tate and Colman made this metamorphosis in the great poet's work, adding a happy marriage, after the French fashion. They made Edgar (Gloucester's son) Cordelia's lover. Dr. Johnson approved the change, and Garrick played the piece thus accommodated to the taste of the times.

M. Jules Lacroix, in his version, has also made alterations in accordance with his judgment. Beauvallet acquitted himself of this heavy and difficult part with infinite skill. The 'making up' was

admirable; a snow-white beard and long white hair streaming over his shoulders. The character was studied with extreme care. The sudden anger, the hesitations, the weakness of the poor old king, were given with broad and striking accuracy. Terrible in the mad scenes, Beauvallet was irresistibly touching when he crouched before Cordelia's dead body. A word simply murmured into her ear had more effect than all the violent outbursts in the world.

Most of our readers will be aware of the special interest attached, in Paris, to the first performance of a new piece. M. Claretie gives a vivid picture of the scene in his notice of 'Le Roman d'une Honnête Femme'—'The Romance of a Virtuous Wife'—a comedy in three acts, by Madame de Prébois and M. Theodore Barrière, acted at the Théâtre du Gymnase. This piece completely failed before the peculiar public of the first representation, who showed themselves a little severe on a work, badly constructed perhaps, clumsily conducted in certain portions, a singular medley of brutality and sentiment, but also vigorous and wonderfully honest and to the purpose.

The 'Romance of a Virtuous Wife' is, on the whole, a melancholy history, distressingly commonplace, an every-day story, something like the 'Accidents and Occurrences' in newspapers, or a trial before a Court of Probate and Divorce, in three acts. Madame Chabanel (whose Christian name is Eliane), a charming woman, already a mother, who adores her children and does not detest her husband, is the most resigned and neglected of wives. She stops at home like a Roman matron, perhaps also spinning wool, remaining almost a prisoner, whilst Chabanel (who is a druggist, perfumer, or something of the sort) takes his pleasure on the Boulevards, and frequents fashionable restaurants with one Cydalise Gobseck (a young lady no better than she should be) on his arm. One evening when his blood is heated with wine he quarrels with an officer just returned

from China, calls him an imbecile, and receives a box on the ear. The inevitable consequence is a duel. But Chabanel would die of fright before it came off, unless he had resolved to give notice to the police and reckon on the interference of the gendarmerie. But Eliane, who learns the news of the quarrel, knows nothing of her husband's prudent arrangements. In her mind's eye she already sees him wounded, perhaps killed, by the accursed officer, whom she does not know, but whose name and address she contrives to ascertain. Impelled by the affection which every woman feels for the father of her children, she hastens, half out of her senses, to M. Paul de Castellan's domicile.

Now, chance would have it that the captain had very lately travelled in the same railway carriage with Eliane, sitting on the opposite seat, face to face. It seems that he was smitten with her between two stations, electrically, in modern style. He is immensely disconcerted at recognising, in the angel of the railway—whom?—the wife of his adversary. This gives rise to a scene which, to be accepted by the audience, required unusually skilful and delicate treatment. M. de Castellan should have declared, as if in spite of himself, in a bitter or sorrowful exclamation, his love for the fair petitioner. But instead of letting his secret escape him involuntarily, he blurts out at Eliane something like this:

'Eh! madame, it is difficult for me to spare your husband's life.'

'Why so?'

'Because I love you.'

It may be doubted, moreover, whether a passion conceived during a journey of less than an hour, and without M. de Castellan's speaking a word to Eliane, could attain sufficient violence to urge a gentlemanly man to frankness which looks very like violence. The public protested against it; and certainly the public were right. And so it may as well plainly be stated that the character of M. de Castellan is absolutely false, inconsistent and unnatural to the end. We have just seen him as brutal

as a dragoon; he shortly becomes as sentimental as a Werter. But the reader will be able to judge for himself.

The duel takes place. Chabanel has forgotten to put into the post his letter to the police. Obligated to take the sword in hand, he is driven by main force, trembling, to the ground by one of his seconds. M. de Castellan, who has 'sworn to efface with his own blood the words he addressed to Eliane'—you may fancy this an exaggeration, but there it is—this magnanimous captain throws himself on his adversary's sword, and so gets deeply wounded in the chest. He is carried home bleeding, unconscious, and laid at full length on a sofa. 'He has not an hour to live,' is the doctor's verdict. Eliane, in tears, kneels beside the patient, who, recovering his senses, perceives the young wife, makes a second declaration, again tells her that he loves her, and at the same time returns an embroidered handkerchief which she had let fall at her first visit, and which he had ever since treasured next his heart. A little sentimental, that.

'Keep the handkerchief! You will bring it me back when you are cured!'

'Ah! shall I ever be cured? You do not love me!'

'Live then; I love you!'

For people speaking to each other for the second time the conversation is rather warm. In fact it is red-hot Werterism, pure and unadulterated. Eliane, it cannot be denied, is undoubtedly a very virtuous woman. Any other wife, in fact, would have foreseen the probable or possible case of M. de Castellan's recovery, and the complications necessarily resulting from the command 'Live; I love you.' It is not Célemène who would venture to undertake the dangerous office of a Sister of Charity.

As may be expected, M. de Castellan does recover. He returns, restores the handkerchief, and reminds Eliane of the words she murmured in the dying man's ear.

'But I never said that. But you were delirious, monsieur. But you were dreaming!'

Eliane's merit in thus repulsing M. de Castellan is all the greater because she decidedly loves him, and now knows why he fought with Chabanel. The officer—and hence the quarrel—had heedlessly walked on the long train of Cydalise's dress. She is aware of her husband's infidelity and the life of debauchery which he leads.

From that time Chabanel lives separated from his wife, she in Auvergne, he in Paris. Natural enough; nevertheless, one circumstance rather spoils this virtuous wife as a model for others. She has made up her mind to a complete separation, an utter rupture, because Chabanel has been led into frequentation of the *Café Anglais*. She makes the father a stranger to his children because he has had a few bottles of champagne uncorked! Before the duel she ran all over Paris to save him; after the duel she leaves Paris to get out of his way. This really seems a little severe. Not that a word can be said in excuse of Chabanel.

The portrait of the citizen Lovelace is excellently treated. The public did not understand it, or at least would not accept it, but showed its displeasure. In the last act Chabanel compromised everything. Yet in that lay the whole pith of the piece. The second act cleverly brings forward the preparations for the duel, the farce of the seconds' negotiations; and the house was diverted by the caricature of an American blusterer, experienced in hostile meetings, who threatens to blow out Chabanel's brains if he flinches. But what is that? A *Palais-Royal* vaudeville treated, nothing more. The third act, on the contrary, is a striking picture, of hard and sombre truthfulness.

The duel has metamorphosed Chabanel. He gives himself airs. The good man has become a hero of the Boulevard, a man *à la mode*. He is no longer Chabanel the druggist; he is 'Chabanel who wounded M. de Castellan.' Chabanel strives to make himself worthy of his reputation; he changes the quiet frock-coat and trousers for the Bismarck-coloured jacket, the tight pantaloons,

and the tiny hat of the fast young gentleman. He sports a camellia in his buttonhole, an imperceptible cane, and the ways of the heroes of private cabinets at restaurants. Though still smelling of the petroleum he retailed the other day, he strives hard to ape the Richelieu. Ruined, however, taken by the throat by necessity, turned into ridicule behind his back by a jade, very hard put to meet certain bills, he starts for Auvergne, and falls like a bomb in the house of his wife. What does he want? Two hundred thousand francs (8000*l.*), his children's fortune, and that to set up the son of an adventurer.

The scene between the husband and wife is violent, and fearlessly written. It made the audience look black. The husband entreats, caresses, humbles himself, makes his confession; and the wife, seized with disgust, speedily grants him what he asks. All this gave great offence. The public of first representations, it must be remarked, is a dragon of virtue, invincible in its puritanism, a sybarite of propriety, complaining of a fold in a moral rose-leaf. Shall we say it, nevertheless? Its grand airs of prudery are often strangely out of place.

With rare exceptions the audiences of first nights are composed of elements which are tolerably muddly and ambiguous in their quality. What is called *Tout Paris*, 'All Paris,' the famous All Paris of intelligence and distinction, is in reality only the Paris of racket and scandal. This public of first representations, which varies very little from one theatre to another, might be made the subject of a curious statistical or, if you like, chemical inquiry. On analysing the divers elements of which it is composed you would not find much of the heroic left at the bottom of the crucible. There was a time when the public of first performances, thoroughly sifted and winnowed, was recruited out of the *élite*. All the thinkers of the town were there. There was no need then to be afraid of addressing the boxes in a language which they would not understand. Count now the boxes which,

on such occasions, are occupied by respectable women. On the contrary, it is come to this, that a respectable woman cannot, without risk, venture to show herself in an *avant-scène*, for fear of being mistaken for one of the *anonymas* who go there, most assuredly not to listen, but to display, in carefully-studied attitudes, their jewellery and their plastered skins.

Two good articles have been written on first representations; one, by Alexandre Dumas, jun., in 'Paris Guide,' is a masterpiece of Parisian spirit, only you detect too plainly the dramatic author who does not care to quarrel with his public. The tip of the ear peeps out; the raillery is diplomatic; and the author, who naturally is irony itself, ventures on this tender ground with all the precautions of a skater who does not care to break the ice. Accordingly M. Dumas does not hesitate to affirm that a *lorette*, a frail one, is better to applaud a piece than a great lady, who is always afraid of cracking her gloves. But nobody wants an audience composed of great ladies exclusively. The other article is by Edmond About, who approaches much nearer to the truth, and is consequently very severe. People not received in good society, aspirants, fast men, but few serious observers, are what M. About finds in these special assemblies. It would be easy to discover even worse than that.

All which would be of little consequence if this public of first performances did not exercise on the fortunes of a piece the enormous influence which it is impossible to deny. That public is really the dramatic king-maker, the Warwick of the theatre. There is little or no appeal from its verdict. The 'Mariage d'Olympe,' condemned the first night by this prudish jury more than fourteen years ago, still pays the penalty. This medley, almost dissolute public, wants not to be contradicted, shocked, but caressed and flattered in its weaknesses. It allows you only a certain amount of liberty and boldness, beyond which it protests and takes offence. It loves the sentimentalities which

gently rock its weary and worn-out spirit, like a man who, tired of high-spiced dishes, takes to a diet of buttermilk; it calls for an educated literature, or rather it prefers a soft pillow on which to repose its vices and to sleep in peace.

The third act of the 'Roman d'une Honnête Femme'—to return to it—abrupt and badly put together, is nevertheless one of the boldest things attempted by M. Théodore Barrière, who is not timid. The public took especial offence when Chabanel insults his wife, who gets angry, with praises of his mistress. 'Very well! And what then? You know nothing about the woman. She is at least as much worth having as you are.' The scene may be guessed. It cauterises to the quick, like a red-hot iron. Perhaps it might have been more easily accepted if Pradeau had not been charged with the part of the husband. Pradeau is an amusing actor, who has proved in 'Nos Bons Villageois' that he possesses the secret of tears as well as of laughter; but he really is too vulgar in the personage of Chabanel. He still further italicises, by his heaviness, the odious features of the character. Suppose in his place Landrol or any other, extorting from Madame Chabanel the two hundred thousand francs, with perfidy instead of cynicism, the scene would have remained within the limits of serious comedy, and would not have called forth those protestations. Moreover, the ending of the piece is unsatisfactory. Chabanel leaves his wife's house on horseback, and breaks his neck upon the road. Eliane is left a widow, and the virtuous wife can marry M. de Castellan at her leisure.

We must not omit two other important influences bearing on success or failure on the French stage, namely, the *claque* and the *sifflet*. We have no word to express the first—which means a band of hired or organised applauders; and indeed *claque* is not dictionary French, but a sobriquet or slang accepted by all who have anything to do with playgoing. The *sifflet* is literally and practically a small whistle used to express strong disapprobation.

We differ from our Gallic neighbours in several small theatrical particulars. We hiss bad actors with our unassisted tongues and palates; the French hiss them by blowing little whistles, whose sound gives a far keener heart-piercing stab. The French request the repetition of a song by a Latin word, *bis*; they have even formed from it the verb *bisser*, to ask for twice. We express the same desire by the employment of a French word, *encore*. It is singular that neither nation should have thought a word of their own sufficient to answer the purpose.

The right of the public to the whistle or the hiss is a perfectly natural right, long since admitted in some form or another, which the spectator purchases at the same time as his play-ticket. In fact, everybody has a right to complain if the merchandise he has paid for does not suit his taste. The privilege has not seldom been abused for the manifestation of personal likings and dislikes. While Mrs. Jordan, the actress, was living under the protection of the last Duke of York, she felt obliged to dismiss an Irish cook. 'Arrah, by Jasus!' said the angry woman, 'won't I go to the one-shilling gallery, and there I'll hiss your royal highness!' The claque, on the contrary, is an essentially modern institution, and only dates from a few years back. Certainly, the dramatists of the eighteenth century, for instance, to force a success, hired, as Figaro says, 'quelques battoirs,' a few clappers, and paid those auxiliaries with their own hard cash. 'Another triumph like this, and I am a ruined man!' said Dorat, as he came away from the performance of one of his pieces. But they might be considered as so many friends recruited and franked in their expenses by the author. You might, up to a certain point, accept the neighbourhood of that enthusiastic cabal, since the public still maintained the right of protesting against its decisions. The packed jury had not yet taken possession of the whole house.

In our days, on the contrary, those irregular troops have been drilled

into regiments, and the claque, previously existing on sufferance, has become sovereign master of the theatre. Dramatic art is literally in the hands of the chief of the claque. He can, at will, cause a piece to fail, or can launch it successfully. He has his share of the receipts, and often the lion's share. He gives his support to managements, paying himself with tickets in which he speculates, and renders the traffic of the dramatic shop still more underhand and repulsive.

As to the men whom he hires to help him, they generally come from nobody knows where; they, and not the gentlemen who write in newspapers, are practically the real theatrical critics. And they know it well. It is singular that, in France (the remark is M. Claretie's), every man installed in any post whatever immediately becomes a *functionary*, struts, swells, and gives himself airs of importance. At the theatre, the claqueur who stuns your ears with his unintelligent clappings, believes himself also clothed with a function, and becomes a perfect jack-in-office. He lays down the law, compels success, crushes any hostile manifestation, insults those who give their opinion, however entitled they may be to give it. He does better, or worse; associating himself with the police, and helping them to do their work.

On one occasion, somebody 'whistled' Mdlle. Silly. The applause and *bisses* of the claque irritated those of the audience who did not think her song amusing. The claqueurs pointed out the guilty whistler to the police, stretching out their arms, vociferating, employing abusive language, and shouting 'A la porte!'—'Turn him out!' So that people admitted gratuitously contrive to turn out those who have paid for their places. The absurdity of the abuse needs no further comment. It would be something, however, if the claqueurs would content themselves with making a noise. But they are quite ready to proceed from insult to personal injury, and have often given proofs of their readiness to do so. The scandalous performances of the 'Cotillon,' eight

or nine years ago, are an instance. M. Claretie has seen *claqueurs* give *fisticuffs* to spectators in the orchestra. Similar outrages occurred at the representations of 'Henriette Maréchal,' at the Théâtre-Français, and of the 'Nouveau Cid' at the Vaudeville, where the *claqueurs* shouted to the whistlers, 'We will wait for you outside!'

In that duel of an author with the public called a first performance, the *claqueurs* play the part of seconds, in conscience; that is, they make matters worse. They indispose the real audience. How many failures are due to the intolerant zeal of these insurers of success! The actors themselves also suffer from it. The *claque* often interrupts an effective situation so completely, that the artist, obliged to stop short at the very height of his passion, and wait for the end of the misplaced salvo, is not unfrequently unable to wind himself up to the same pitch of emotion which he felt before.

It may be said that an attempt has already been made to suppress the *claque*, but that managers found themselves obliged to revive it. The performances were too cold and stiff, scarcely relieved by a hesitating murmur, a little timid applause. At the Théâtre-Français, the *claque* once done away with, the representations in which Madame Rachel took part were the only ones that displayed a little animation. The others went on dully and monotonously from seven in the evening till midnight. The answer is that the public has lost the habit of applauding ever since the *claque* has taken such firm root. The paying spectator would blush to be taken for one of the hired members of the audience. At most, therefore, he ventures to give a sign of approval when the curtain falls on the last scene of a work which has delighted him. The rest of the piece he leaves to the *claqueurs*.

In this way, little by little, passion and excitement, that is to say, life, have disappeared from amongst Parisian audiences. The performances are methodically regulated,

according to a sort of ritual, and tears burst forth at a given minute. The chief of the *claque* undertakes to supply emotion by contract. But it happens that that potentate has his likes or his dislikes, or even his interests; and many an author, because he does not please him, or because his pockets are empty, receives only scanty braves and feeble approbation. How many pieces have come to grief because the *claque* would not support them! It is sometimes the manager who gives his orders to that effect, sometimes the *claqueurs* themselves, who determine to stifle some innovation. All this is evidently an abuse and a scandal.

A foreigner will hardly suspect the tactics and complete organisation of the *claque*, until he has seen the same piece performed two or three times, especially if it is one which is having a run, such as one of the splendid *féeries* which are given at the larger theatres. The applause is repeated just as accurately as the dialogue, the songs, or the groupings of a dance. At such an actor or actress's first entrance, there comes a clap of welcome, from exactly the same part of the house, and doubtless from the same pair of hands which are periodically crossed with silver. Certain points in the performance are italicised in this way, as with an audible note of admiration, to fix the attention of the audience. The *claqueur* is thus the showman of the human menagerie. Singly, moreover, he is judiciously distributed, above, below, and all around. The body of the *claque*, who keep together, are not agreeable neighbours to sit next, nor pleasant to look at. Often shabby, always hardhanded, they go through their drill and do their work; but at other moments than when their service is due, they scarcely pretend to take an interest in the performance.

On one occasion, at the Bouffes-Parisiens, during the performance, a little boy some eight years of age, seated in the *balcon*, stood up at times, and laughing with his hearty, unaffected, childish laugh, applauded as hard as he could with

his little hands. Not that he always applauded the wittiest points of the dialogue, but his countenance expressed such sincere and simple delight, that the audience allowed itself to be carried away, and laughed whenever he laughed. Here we have a race of *claqueurs* who certainly might be utilised. Three or four good-humoured children, placed here and there about the house, would do much for the success of comedies.

As to hissing or the whistle, M. Claretie will not consent to give it up. The public of Paris have renounced the privilege of applauding, but he cannot conceive their being robbed of the whistle. The reign of bad pieces dates from the whistle's exile. The public was found so benevolent, so debonair, that authors of late years have thought anything good enough to be set before it. But they will look twice if it gets seriously out of

temper. The whistle would work miracles, even so far as to set theatrical paralytics on their legs. No doubt there is the sentimental side of the question. The whistle may become a murderer. The whistle killed Nourrit; just as criticism killed the French painter Gros and our poet Keats. But Art also has its battle-fields. Must we give up the struggle, for pity's sake? Criticism and the hiss or the whistle have, after all, been the salvation of many others. The actors themselves demand the whistle; they would not altogether lose the screaming spur which puts their blood up. They will tell you that a whistle or a hiss insures their success if they are acting well, and forces them to do better if they are acting badly. The whistle, we may be assured, has never discouraged any but make-believe artists, nor put an end to any but badly-written pieces.



A PREACHMENT ON OLD MAIDS.

SETTLEMENT and a home are the great prizes of life to which every young lady is taught to look forward. From the nursery to her first ball as a young *débutante*, her thoughts are directed to the attainment of a husband. It is taken as a matter of course by anxious mothers that their daughters are quite certain to marry, and the daughters themselves never contemplate any other possibility. All education is based upon that supposition and is carried on with reference to it. Worldly-minded women are on the look-out for eligible 'parties' very early; and when any young man specially commendable for wealth and position makes his appearance in society they are not slow to make his acquaintance and invite him to dinners and balls and breakfasts, hoping to secure him for one of their daughters, who are, of course, charming, as all women naturally are. The daughters themselves know the rent roll of every young man, and receive him accordingly with the deference that is due to wealth. If the mothers of Belgravia are sedulous in attracting to their houses the rich and popular, they expect their daughters to do the rest of the business, and cast their nets over the birds which come to them for crumbs of comfort. The whole affair is conducted very differently abroad. On the Continent young ladies are kept in the background, and are supposed, by a magnificent self-deception, to have no eyes for young men. They do not initiate any conversation, and scarcely do more than answer when they are spoken to. They are dressed simply and sit aloof from the general company. If they are to marry at all it is arranged for them whom they shall marry and when, by their respective parents. The parents of the young lady think that a marriage with the Marquis de Vautrien will suit them exactly, as he has rank and she has money. They hint, they suggest the possibility of such a union; they inquire whether it would be

acceptable, and after a satisfactory result to their well-directed inquiries, the offer is formally made, and Mademoiselle and Monsieur le Marquis are engaged and in due time married. Madame then for the first time appears in society, free to speak, to act, and to think for herself. Whether on the Continent or in England, marriage is the point to which the thoughts, wishes, and hopes of young ladies are directed by nurses, governesses, and mothers. In schools for young ladies, this is especially true, for the confidences of schoolgirls with each other relate, nine times out of ten, to some youth who fills up the vacuum in their affections. A certain interest and importance attach themselves to a girl who is supposed to have a love story; and, on the other hand, one who is not surrounded by any such interest is held very cheap by her fellows. No account is taken of the many unhappy marriages that exist. Homes made miserable by uncongenial tempers brought together by the indissoluble marriage vow; hearts broken by harsh and unkind treatment inflicted with the high authority of a husband; or all household and family duties neglected and unfulfilled, and all domestic peace expelled through the caprice of a wayward, wilful, and selfish wife, are not taken into account by those who for sordid or worldly motives hurry their children into ill-assorted marriages. There is a large amount of matrimonial infelicity of which the Divorce Courts do not and cannot take any cognizance. It is beyond their sphere, outside the circle of their operations; but it, nevertheless, exists. As a general proposition it has been often stated that there is more misery in the world than the world knows. This is especially true of marriage, and it reminds us of an absurd story which was told of a Roman Catholic boy, who, on being examined in his Catechism, replied to the question 'What is Matrimony?' by saying, 'A middle state in which people suffer

for a time on account of their sins.' His confusion between purgatory and matrimony well expresses what must be in the minds of many persons who have made a false move in what is frequently called 'the lottery of life,' and have to lament an ill-assorted marriage, which, if it does not make their life a hell upon earth, has at least converted it into a purgatory.

As the married state is so widely exalted, being set before the minds of all marriageable girls in this legitimate object of their ambition, the idea of being an old maid has become really alarming; and almost every young lady experiences an uncomfortable sensation, which she would be at a loss to describe, when the possibility of being an old maid first dawns upon her mind. The attributes which surround unmarried women of a certain age are anything but pleasing, and, whether true or false, are not calculated to render the state of single blessedness desirable or even palatable to one who looks at it from a distance. Acidity, narrow-mindedness, a biting tongue, love of scandal and gossip are, without much thought, indiscriminately attributed to all spinsters who have passed the Rubicon. Disappointed affection is apt to sour the temper; and any one who has been rash enough to expend her heart's best treasure either upon an unworthy object or without a more than reasonable prospect of an equivalent in return, will probably find herself before long viewing all the aspects of life unfavourably. The shadow which has come across her path will cast a shade over her powers of appreciation; and people and things, and all that pertains to life will lose their brightness, just as in a fog the real and relative proportion of what we see is destroyed by the medium through which we see it. People of sanguine temperament are said to look through coloured glass, because they invest everything with the bright colours of their own imagining; and people of a gloomy, discontented spirit distort all that they look upon and create for themselves miseries which have no real existence beyond their

own minds. A life, however full of hope and promise in the beginning that ends in disappointment and failure, will infallibly produce bitterness of spirit unless there are some very strong and active counteracting influences at work. But there is no greater mistake than to affirm either that matrimony is the universal vocation of women, or that a sour temper and a discontented spirit are inseparable from the condition of old maids.

There is no doubt whatever that the more the affections are called out and exercised on worthy objects the more generous and large-hearted people become. Like everything else, good qualities increase and acquire strength by use. It is only when they are, as it were, hoarded that they contract and dwindle. Men who are not accustomed to do kind and generous acts become more and more disinclined to do them. They who are niggards of their love, or who have but few opportunities of exhibiting it, become more and more chary of doing kindnesses, and their faculty of loving diminishes. The married have certainly this advantage over the unmarried, that the sphere of their affections is considerably enlarged by the variety of interests and the greater opportunities which demand the exercise of their affections. A husband and a large family of children develop the sympathies and call out faculties of which the possessors were scarcely conscious till there was some scope for their operations. It is to be remarked that as the poor know how to sympathize with the poor, so they whose power of loving is called most into requisition find that, like the widow's oil and meal, the supply more than keeps pace with the demand. There are also many reasons why we might naturally expect to find old maids less capable of an expenditure of their affections. With fewer opportunities at hand, reverses or disappointment tend to contract the impulses of the heart; and unless they are on their guard, there is great danger of their affections becoming narrowed to the small horizon by which they are circumscribed.

Self, if left to itself, soon absorbs all our faculties, and people, who feed on their own hearts grow indifferent to the joys and sorrows of others. Therefore unmarried women are often occupied with their own maladies, their own petty trials; and even their cats, because they belong to themselves, absorb their interests to a degree which becomes absurd, even if it is not absolutely wrong. The spitefulness of an old maid has become quite a proverb, because her own disappointment makes her envious of the success of others, and she is as quick in detecting flaws as she is open-mouthed in proclaiming them. The domestic and daily life of her neighbours supplies her with food for gossip, which is said to be the *specialité* of an old maid. It has been humorously affirmed that the Kilkenny cats are a fitting type of all spinsters of a certain age, and that a contest between them affords as much sport as the greatest lover of mischief can desire. There is, however, one peculiarity about them, which has always struck us as most remarkable. After they have passed the Rubicon of a certain age they consider themselves justified in pronouncing, *ex cathedra* as it were, upon a host of subjects connected with children and their entrance into life with a precision and fulness that would seem to belong only to married women. But so it is—whether they consider that riper years entitle them to dogmatize on subjects of which we, in all charity, hope they have not had any practical experience, it is not for us to say. We only remark upon the fact *en passant*, and express our astonishment that it should be so.

Admitting the justice, in some instances, of the complaint that is made against old maids, and not denying that some amongst them are conspicuous for their *mauvaise langue*, we maintain that they have not the monopoly of it, but that married women have before now acquired a reputation for unequalled skill in backbiting and spitefulness against their fellows. We maintain also that, while admitting the evil tendency of everything that contracts the affections, some of the

pleasantest, most agreeable persons we have known, we have found in the condemned ranks of old maids. We said that it required some strong counteracting influences to neutralize the consequences of a life disappointed of what may be said to be its legitimate aims; but when these influences are in full and unfettered operation, the result is that they produce refinement and an elevation of character which is rarely found elsewhere. The discipline of life tries us all, whatever our condition may be. They who fret and strive and fight against their trials expend their strength uselessly; but they who, on the other hand, accept and make the best of them find a grace and a strength which more than compensate for whatever suffering and weariness accompanies the search after the sweetness which lies at the bottom of even the bitterest cup. The old maid who has accepted her lot without repining—who cultivates her intellect and stores her mind—who enlarges her charity by making the trials of others in some measure her own—who sees that there lies before her a large sphere of usefulness which she can pursue undistracted by domestic and family cares, is a source of blessing to herself and others. Her presence is always hailed because of its healing influence. She can allay dissensions, knowing how to speak the 'soft answer that turneth away wrath.' As in the still moonlight the outer world loses whatever it may have of harshness, and all things are mellowed beneath its rays, so in the presence of one who has learnt lessons of patience, resignation, and unselfishness, the world's irregularities are toned down and softened, and the tumult even of undisciplined hearts is stilled.

It belongs to goodness to make itself felt even to the lowest depths of the human heart; and the presence among us of one who teaches, by the very force of her own excellence, without any desire to teach, has a beneficial influence. She is like the good angel that calmed the troubled waters.

Such instances of spinsterhood are not rare, and happily for us it has

been our good fortune to know some. As we have no reason to suppose that we are privileged beyond others, we may safely infer that our readers will be able to endorse what we do not hesitate to affirm—that some of the most delightful moments of our lives have been spent in the society of old maids, whose well-cultivated minds, powers of appreciation, and abundant charity have secured for them the esteem of all who have had the privilege of their acquaintance. In proportion to their triumphing over difficulties and overcoming preju-

dices, they attain an excellence superior to that of the ordinary run of married women; and as years mellow the feelings and affections, and time softens the asperities of life, they who have themselves well in hand are able to estimate all passing circumstances at their real value; for, after all, the true secret of a happy life lies in the knowledge how to meet events as they occur without being unduly ruffled by any.

'It is the mynd that maketh good or ill ;'
'That maketh wretch or happie, rich or poor.'



WITH A ROSE IN HER HAIR.

MY own, it is time you were coming,
 For the ball-room is flooded with light,
 And the leader impatiently humming
 The *valse* they begin with to-night!
 But the music, the flowers, and the lustre
 Lack completeness when you are not there,
 So hasten to join Beauty's muster
 With a rose in your hair.

'Twas thus I first saw you, my own one!
 As adown the long terrace you paced,
 You had plucked the white rose—a full-blown one—
 Which amid your dark tresses was placed.
 Then my heart blossomed forth like the flower,
 To see you so young and so fair,
 As you stood in the shade of the tower
 With a rose in your hair.

And for aye, since that moment enchanted,
 My life, both in sun and in storm,
 In sorrow and joy, has been haunted
 By an angel in feminine form.
 Yet I can't—though 'tis constantly nigh me—
 Describe all its loveliness rare;
 But I know this—it always floats by me
 With a rose in its hair.

And then you remember—(come nearer,
 A word in that ear—like a shell!)—
 When you whispered me none could be dearer
 Than one—but his name I'll not tell.
 Ah! your hair!—of its flower who bereft it?
 For you had none, I vow and declare,
 On regaining the Hall; though you left it
 With a rose in your hair.

But why waste we moments of pleasure?
 Hark! the music invites us above:
 Soon our feet shall beat time to the measure,
 As our hearts beat the measure of love.
 Come, queen of the poet's rich fancies—
 My queen, with whom none may compare,
 Come and glide in your grace through the dances
 With a rose in your hair.



Drawn by R. Newcombe.]

WITH A ROSE IN HER HAIR.

[See the Verses.]

POPPIES IN THE CORN;

OR, GLAD HOURS IN THE GRAVE YEARS.—No. XIV.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE,' &c.

RECREATION GENERALLY.

I HAVE by no means gathered into my handful all or nearly all the possible poppies that dot the sober corn of life. But I remember that I came out only to gather a handful; and not with the intention of stripping the field. And it seems to be about time that the handful was tied up. Here they are, then, the gay flowers: some big and some smaller: some wide-spread and others hardly smoothed out from their crumpling in the green case of the bud: some with a centre of jet, and some with scarce any set off to; their gay scarlet; some standing up pert and saucy, and some pulling sideways, with tears of rain upon their bent heads: various, but all of the poppy family, and gathered into one vivid bunch. Ah, may be they were better, scattered here and there among other growth; and a certain sameness in the colour may be wearisome to the eye; besides, who would care to set a handful of poppies in the vase in her room? Poor flowers! they have their appropriate place on the dry summer-bank, and just studding the corn-ranks here and there; but you smile at the innocence that would offer them to you as a nosegay. A bunch of snowdrops, primroses, or violets—this would be well; a bunch of lilies or choicest roses, even better, some might think. But a bunch of flaunting useless poppies:—of course you take them, rather than hurt the kind meaning that gathered them for you;—but, once fairly out of sight of the well-intentioned giver, you do not care to carry them far: you cast them slyly over that hedgerow: there they may lie and wither quickly in the glare, or slowly in the shade. Let who will pick them up. At any rate you think no more of them.

Yet some might care to pick them up, and put them in water, if per-

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haps their limp languor may revive into crisp life again. Some, who are out of the way of fields where poppies grow: some, whose lot is cast amid row after row, for miles, of brick or plaster houses, and acres of baking pavement: some, thus circumstanced, might, had they the chance, even pick up your slighted posy, and make much of it, and cherish it as a precious thing.

Even thus, let me be bold to hope, this slight ephemeral record of glad hours that now and then studded the more sedate growth of life, may find a welcome here and there, where glad hours are now scarce and few and far between, and dull days of monotonous work the scarcely broken rule of life. A bunch of poppies, with now and then an ear of corn plucked together with the scarlet flower that grew so close to it that one was unconsciously gathered with the other: a gay posy, with here and there, as a relief, the sober green of a graver thought serving as a useful foil to the blaze and laugh of colour. And if, in this last of the handful, if in this tying up the bunch, I should of choice rather select the quiet tints than the gay,—why, you know that dark evergreen ivy and cool fern-fronds come in well at the last to make a frame out of which the vivid hues may burn.

But in truth I am not now going to seek for any particular specimens of recreative enjoyment. I am rather about to take the whole genus, generally; and converse about that.

There is something to be said about the word itself, Recreation, something suggestive in the consideration of its etymology. For from this we get the best definition of what the thing itself is. And in truth this is a matter not really so well and universally understood as

at first thought it might appear to be. Come, let me ask the reader—How would you explain the word? What would be your definition of *Recreation*? I will show presently why I think that, practically, at least, there are many who would give, or rather, who *do* give, a wrong and incorrect answer to the question, 'What is Recreation?'

We have, I repeat, the meaning of the word given in its very etymology. As *Relaxation* plainly tells of the '*nec semper arcum tendit Apollo*,'—the letting a strung mind free from strain and tension; so *Recreation* is the restoring of that part of our being which is constantly being ground away by the ceaseless wear and tear of life. Strength and energy, tone and spirit,—these are renewed and restored to us by a healthful and enjoyable change of employment. We are then, in a measure, *recreated*; we start fresh in the business of life, with a replenished balance at our banker's.

A healthful and enjoyable change of employment: thus I would define recreation. And therefore I can hardly include sleep in my definition. And yet how we are indeed *recreated* in sleep!

'The innocent sleep;

Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life; sore labour's bath;
Balm of hurt minds; great Nature's second
course;

Chief nourisher in life's feast.'

And another poet calls it, as probably we all know,

'Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep!'

Indeed which of us but will endorse the opinion as to the delightfulness, after a day of weary brain and body work, of nestling down into the inviting bed, and closing the 'tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes,' waiting then, just a brief conscious while, for that refreshing balm to settle upon them. For thorough enjoyment of this, you must have retired in good time at night, and be able thus to look forward to a tract of fair broad hours of sleep. You miss the satisfaction of the feeling, however you are still more appreciative of the delightsomeness

of bed, if you have crawled into it at two or three in the morning, after your task of writing (necessary to be sent off on the morrow) is wearily completed. For you feel that you have, until seven o'clock, only a meagre four hours' space for indulgence of fatigue which eight would scarcely rectify. So you are like the man who comes in from a walk furiously hungry, and has perforce to content him with one very small mutton-chop. He keenly appreciates it, no doubt; but he knows, at the outset, that it will but whet his appetite for more. But, with a long night before you, you cuddle under the clothes, and hug the consciousness of feeling unconsciously gathering over you:—

'Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is
For gift or grace surpassing this—
"He giveth His beloved sleep?"'

Nevertheless this restoring power will not fall in with my present idea of *recreation*. Still, while we are considering the etymology of the word, we could hardly altogether exclude this process of winding us up when we totter, and casting us, fresh and steady, spinning back into Life's ring on the morrow.

You see, I describe Recreation as being a healthful and enjoyable change of employment. For *idleness* is not recreation. 'All work and no play,' it is pretty generally held, at least in theory, result in anything but the brightness of the intellect submitted to the process. But here, and elsewhere, the thing is, to find the mean between extremes. For *all play and no work* lead neither to usefulness nor to happiness in the experience of those who try this recipe, wearied with the other. Far more wearisome than hard work does the utter absence of work soon become. Look at the languid, bored, boneless state into which some of the Dundreary class are brought by the disastrous condition of not being *compelled* to do that honest manly work which they have not stamina enough in them to do of free choice, and without compul-

sion. Oh! the talk of 'killing time,' and of 'not knowing what to do'—what would not some men, with the purpose of manhood in them, give for a few of those hours frittered, not set out to interest, hours of contemptible fretting inaction, that *might* have been devoted to happy, manly work! Tell not me that manhood is *latent* in these simpering pseudo-idiots; and that occasion can call out a spark from which, forsooth, they shall, with an air deprecatory of having once been betrayed into manliness, sink back into their smouldering life of unreality, artificiality, affectation again;—tell me not *this* as a palliative. That they *have* good stuff in them, and take a pride and pleasure in graduating in the school of insipidity and unreality, is, to my mind, more to their condemnation than to their praise. 'I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong,'—thus spoke a brave, loving man's heart some centuries ago. Ah! if *that* were the ground of his writing, he might have been spared the labour of an epistle now.

Honest and thorough work: you cannot change your employment pleasantly if you have no employment at all: you cannot recreate mind and body if neither have wear and tear; or if the very so called recreation is the chief wear and tear they have. And that this is so, sometimes, will be presently shown. I like to see a MAN earnest in whatever he is about. I like to see him go about his work in a *thorough* way: and I like to see him really eager, sincere, about his play. Not masking the honest interest which he ought to feel in anything that is worth the doing: not going about with a languid simpering pretence of being dragged into an exertion, whereas he would rather be lolling and lounging about, a carefully-rendered and near imitation of the idiot—this being, it would appear, indeed, the ideal of his imitation. Excited, alert, I would have him; rather too much in earnest about the employment of the moment than not enough in earnest about it; flushed cheeks, hair tossed off the brow, as he eagerly argues about (even such

a trifle as) this stroke in croquet, or this ephemeral question of the day. I would rather he kept his temper, on every ground. I think no game *can* possibly be worth the loss of good humour. But, of the two, I own to a preference for honest excess of vehemence, over what, at least at first, is an *insincere* and *assumed* over-apathy. I hate the folly of a man who has carefully boned himself into a limp, inane, characterless neither-man-nor-woman. The limp, the stare, the eye-glass, the drawl:—Oh, to do him the kindness of taking him by the coat-collar and shaking him into reality, into naturalness, for but one brief half hour!

If you are in an idiot asylum you know what to expect. But, in society, to see young fellows with *capacities* of energy and strength taking absolute pains to appear as though born fools: this is, I own, aggravating to me to the last degree. I wish some one of those of whom I am thinking may happen upon this page, and set himself to use for one half-hour the faculties he is surrendering, and ask himself whether he thinks he is making life, this brief, probationary life, that noble thing which his inmost heart must be aware it is, or might become. And let him cast about for *some* honest employment in which a man may heartily put out the powers with which God has nobly endowed him. Oh, there is work to be done, in this world, for us all, if we will look for it, or even wait for it, with an honest view towards it. It is a noble sight to see a young fellow putting out the strength which God has given him, towards some worthy end. It is a pitiable sight to see him using his energies in the effort to become unenergetic, using his wit in the endeavour to appear a fool, using his strength in emulating helplessness and weakness.

You must, therefore, if you would know the meaning of recreation, know also the meaning of *work*. You must earn before you spend. Recreation must not be the business, but the leisure of life. It must be the poppy merely amid the corn. We cannot have recreation without some exhaustion. We must have

lost something by friction, before we can require to be recreated at all.

So we quite dismiss the absence of earnest employment from our idea of Recreation. Doing nothing is the hardest of hard work: and under such a regimen the muscles and the brain become flaccid and flabby, the temper touchy and irritable, and the whole man altogether unbinged. It is said that, to insure his goods against future depredations, a pastry-cook will sometimes give unlimited license to the boy whom he has taken into his shop: a day or two will sicken him. So with an active-minded man doomed or privileged to be idle. After being left for a whole year with nothing to do, I fancy he would find recreation in a good turn on the treadmill.

Often has it been noticed, in books and in real life too, how natural a mistake, but also how great mistake is that of the busy man, who through a life of close over-work, looks forward to the time when he may give up business, and retire upon a period of unlimited leisure. But I have touched on this before. It is unnecessary to repeat again how complete is his mistake, and how, unwillingly it may be, and by compelled degrees, he discovers that it is too late for him to form new tastes, to seek new employment. That *doing nothing* is, to the energetic mind, no rest at all, far less recreation; and that that to which he had looked forward all his life as the goal towards which his work tended, was, in reality, far more wearying than even those years of incessant over-work had been.

But graver mistakes than that just noticed are committed through the not rightly understanding this truth: that not *absence of occupation*, but congenial, continual, enjoyed occupation, is that which is our real recreation after toil. And so, in the secret hearts of many who have been imperfectly or mistakenly instructed,—or not instructed at all, maybe,—an acknowledged distaste is latent with regard to the prospect of that truest deepest recreation; that recreation in the fullest and most profound sense of the word

which lies (for those who labour faithfully) at the end of this life which tires us all out so. An endless inactivity; this is more or less the idea; all men's varied energies and powers of thought, and myriad branchings of action, merged in the ceaseless and unbroken singing of hymns! Really this idea, more or less hazy, is one lurking, I believe, scarcely detected or sifted, in the minds of many people. Can we wonder that the idea of Heaven, thus represented, becomes a dreary, an uninviting thought, to the eager mind of the young, full as this is of life, activity, and work? But a little thought would detect the mistake. Our actions shall praise our Maker, not our voices only, all our other powers being left to stagnate. It is true that Eternity shall be the singing of His praises; but the song shall come, not from our lips only, but from our lives. So the brook sings as it rushes forth to water the valley, but is silent if it lies stagnant in the pool. So the stars praise Him in their ordered courses; so day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; and though there is neither speech nor language, yet their voice is universally heard.

Well, as I said just now must sometimes be the case, I could not help picking this ear of corn; it grew so close to a poppy.

Properly to understand the true object of recreation would greatly assist in guiding us to a wise selection in our search for it. You can make a blaze, no doubt, by putting the end of a candle, or a drench of paraffin on the sinking fire. But what it really wanted was *fresh fuel*. The enlivening process to which you resorted was an illusory one. The sudden blaze soon dies down, and behold! the fire has sunk lower than before.

Now I would show by this illustration, that many of the amusements of Society are not recreation. They are, in short, the serious work of life with many. The round of balls, parties, theatres: the gay 'life of Society,'—there may be at first an excitement about it which makes

the life delightful. Just as it is with the drunkard, at first there are in his pursuit fascinations which lead him on. But it is with him as with the life of frivolity; even when the enjoyment has died out, there is a necessity to go on. And just as he did not, in the first instance, drink with the view merely of being refreshed, recruited, so it is in what I call the dram-drinking of Society. Not recreation, but excitement, was the thing sought: it was not thirst, but craving, which had to be appeased.

What wonder, then, that before long the very amusements rather tire than refresh? What wonder that, cup after cup cloying the sated palate, the stimulating power must be heightened with hot spice of vicious pleasure, until even this also becomes tame, and that weary, bored condition is reached, that premature old age, with neither its honour nor its toil, which we may perceive in young hearts and young faces that have thus had perpetual stimulant in the place of daily bread? What wonder that to us, in our quieter life, whose anxieties even are healthful, whose work is steady and play, if rare, yet even therefore the more intensely enjoyed,—what wonder that to us, outside the circle of that earnest and wearying frivolity, there should ooze out, from time to time, dark hints of a withering blight gaining ground among the fair new flowers that are brought up in that unnatural and forced heat? Whispers of an ever-growing laxity of morals; of innendo permitted or not suppressed by even fair listeners; of evil taken for granted and treated as a thing allowed by tacit consent, and that has become matter of course? If the life of idleness tires, the life busy only in frivolities becomes such a weight upon the hands as to be ere long, almost an intolerable burden.

Many of the amusements of Society, then, are not Recreation, but most fatiguing, distressing toil. For you must note that the languor, the lassitude, the ennui, the weary-o'-the-world look and language which is not unfamiliar to those who mix, even occasionally, in fashionable life,

are not the result of excess of work, but of excess of (if we must call it so) *play*.

And besides that such a life, as a whole, is of all the most wearisome, we have further to consider more particularly the intensely *fatiguing* nature of many of the employments (for recreations we may not miscall them) of the gay world. Once and away to dip somewhat deep into the night hours at some merry evening party; this might do little more harm than to set the brain spinning beyond the control of much quiet recollected thought before the wearied limbs and excited mind sought the welcome bed. Add to this the chance of somewhat later hours in the morning; and then let us say that, for the mere now and then of life, the censor might seem over grave who should too unpromisingly censure the venial exception to what would be blameable as a rule.

But continue this night after night, —theatre, ball, party,—making it the rule, not the exception, and only consider the severe toil of it: the wear and tear to body, soul, and spirit. Nay, look experimentally at the results of the life to which I have alluded; and consider whether fatigue and languor of body, intense depression of spirits, and a very searing of soul, are not the at least frequent results of it?

Recreation, then, must be had, but it is not the chief object of life: if made so, it ceases, from the necessities of the case, to be *recreation*. The object of it, the very condition of its being, is that it should follow work and precede work. Hear the wise Poet-Divine: 'Let not your recreations be lavish spenders of your time; but choose such which are healthful, short, transient, recreative, and apt to refresh you: but at no hand dwell upon them, or make them your great employment: for he that spends all his time in sports, and calls it recreation, is like him whose garment is all made of fringes and his meat nothing but sauces: they are healthless, chargeable, and useless.' 'It is lawful to relax and unbend our bow, but not to suffer it to be unready or unstrung.'

I remember feeling much inclined to moralize over a Butterfly dying in my Church in the winter time. Nay, you will remind me *that* simile is surely worn out long ago. There have been too many morals drawn from butterflies, bees, and ants, to render any further such use of them endurable. Say you so? Nevertheless I will e'en have my say about the simple, common incident. I shall probably, you know, say it in something of different words from those of my predecessors.

I was, then, passing, I think, from the reading-desk to the pulpit; and, as I ascended the stone stairs, I was caught by what struck me just then as a somewhat pathetic sight. A once rich-hued, vivid-barred *Atalanta* butterfly, feebly fluttering to, crawl up the dim panes, and falling back helplessly to die on the dusty ledge of the window. The rich or glowing colours, so dingy and faded now, the velvet pile so threadbare, the creature whose life is so connected with summer days, fallen into the grips of winter; the thing most suggestive of gaiety and careless enjoyment, now so pathetic a wreck of its summer self. Once it had wandered, a very *Ginevra*, away from its flowers and delights and ultramarine days, and burning noons and mellow nights, within the prison (to it) of these cold stone walls. Unhappily safe from casualties of birds or storms, and sheltered, I suppose, in a measure, from extremest frosts, and so having contrived to linger out a miserable existence after the summer days, in which alone it was at home, had gone.

One might have moralized in many ways concerning this incident. It might have been a splendid beauty, grown, in a moody hour, awary of the world; slipping, in her mood, out of the golden mellow day, into some cold and 'narrowing nunnery walls,' and, being in truth without the heart for this, thereafter finding her mistake, and pining desolately away,—fluttering, as it were, instinctively towards the warm light, but overweak to profit by the relenting gleam, and so just sinking back to die.

But the turn the incident took with me was the more commonplace one. I felt inclined to lay by my prepared discourse, and to deal in the obvious suggestions connected with the episode. For indeed, life is made up of commonplaces; of events new enough, it is true, to those first struck by the shaft of agony, or the sunbeam of joy, but all a matter-of-course to those who are the unimpassioned lookers-on—until their own turn comes.

Butterfly hours,—these, it seemed to me, were well. But not the butterfly *life*. And I remembered another incident connected with a dead butterfly. It was in a famous picture in the Royal Academy of one year, I think, of the Eighteen-fifties, a picture, ghastly enough, but stamping itself on the memory, a picture (it was Egg's, I think) in two panels, a picture representing the gay and glorious life, and the dismal and wretched death, of the princely Buckingham. There he lay, stretched out on the low pallet, ghastly in death, merely desolate and utterly deserted!

'In the worst Inn's worst room.'

It mattered little that this line, that the picture itself, was not wholly accordant with facts. If this were not altogether so with Buckingham, yet such an end to such a beginning and continuance is not one unknown nor uncommon in the history of the world. Gay butterflies that flaunted in the summer got caught in the grip of the winter days:—But I forgot. I omitted that very detail of the picture which is most allied with my subject.

Just like that forlorn insect which I had seen in church, there was, allegorically intended, lying on the plebeian window-ledge,—a once gay butterfly. Threadbare in garb; dull in hue; the very counterpart of the gay idler that lay there, after all his trifling, brought face to face at last with a serious matter, even with Death.

There was more than a sermon in that commonplace introduction of the dead butterfly.

It seems so especially sad to see so more than blank an end of a life

that so loved the sunshine and the beauty and the warmth, so formed to bask in the open flowers, and to luxuriate on the south walls bossed with mellowing apricots and swelling peaches. God gave him that joyous heart: and foolish man would wish for him nothing better than that he might unrestrainedly indulge its summer-tastes. But did not very early a grave voice warn him that that joyousness was given to be husbanded, not spent? That here self-denial, discipline, training, was the condition of life, which here, for wise purposes, to be fully revealed one day, was appointed to be cramped, cabined, confined from its instincts of unrestraint and free following of its fancy? It was to be 'only waiting.' But he would not wait. He would not now pinch a bit to live on the interest merely. He would spend the principal recklessly, lavishly. And soon it is all gone. Then instead of the profusion to which sufficiency would have increased, there is no provision to satisfy that yearning for happiness which indeed was God-implemented in the beings who were created for happiness; only a start aside on their part diverted and delayed the plan. Then, even now and here, begins the craving of that fearful famine whose yearnings shall last throughout Eternity.

And so much for mere butterflies.

We, the mentors, we, the parents, must beware of drawing the reins too tight, and so placing unnecessary stumbling-blocks in the way of our natural or spiritual children. We have much to answer for, if we do; and, truly, we have need, sore need, in this matter, of all the wisdom, of all the guidance, that we can obtain. For we have, in our severity of training, both with ourselves and in the case of others, to guard against the almost certain recoil, against a probable if not an inevitable reaction.

More especially, perhaps, since reaction is the atmosphere in which we live now-a-days. Children have reacted from a servile respect and an unnatural awe, into a more than due familiarity: and from the deferential use of the holy names,

'Father,' 'Mother,' have passed into the use of slang names which I shall merely stigmatize as being in the lowest degree of bad taste, ill-breeding, and debased intellect. Statesmen have reacted from routine to revolution. Churchmen have reacted from utter baldness and deadness to the tendency towards floridity and fever. Girls have reacted from huge pelisses and poke bonnets to what I shall briefly call 'Mountebank costume.' Tories have reacted to Radicals under the thin skin of Conservatism. Medicine has reacted from excessive bleeding and drugging to the quackery of Homœopathy. And the old, indiscriminate horror at the very name of *novel*, were it innocent or baneful, has reacted to the toleration or patronizing of volumes as full of poison as are a cobra's fangs.

A kind though a firm hand, and while you will not be weakly indulgent, or traitorously lax, yet, having trained your young people to some honest labour, and put them in the way of real, thorough work, do not grudge for them, nay, rather provide for them recruiting rests on the journey, recreative refreshment by the way. Teach them ever, by the nobility of work, the sweetness of recreation.

But I want, while I am about it, to suggest a simple rule which might with advantage guide and direct us in our recreation.

Life is a grave thing, and yet, in society, it seems almost a crime (at least a mistake, which in society is held to be a far worse thing than crime) to treat it or even allude to it as such. I remember being much struck with the truth and a certain sad beauty, in a review which touched upon this thought of Frederick Locker's poetry. It described it, together with Præd's and Thackeray's, as 'masked poetry.' 'The true feeling of the poet is masked with laughter.' The poetry of men who belong to society, and who, nevertheless, amid all its froth, feel that 'there are depths in our nature which even in the gaiety of drawing-rooms cannot be forgotten. Theirs is the poetry of bitter-

sweet—of sentiment that breaks into humour, and of solemn thought that, lest it should be too solemn, plunges into laughter.' And this is, the reviewer says, in an especial sense the character of the verse of society. 'When society ceases to be simple it becomes sceptical.' And this tone is assumed 'in self-defence, and becomes a necessity of rapid conversation.' When society is refined, that is, when the intercourse of its constituent parts has become a thing of sickly, at least of exotic, growth; not the healthy clustering of daisies in the meadows, or of primroses in the copse, but the unnatural culture of the hothouse;—when society has thus been educated into artificiality, and the *real* eliminated from its life; squeamishness substituted for modesty, nonchalance for feeling, languor for honest impulse, pulp for bones;—when thus society is refined, 'it begins to dread the exhibition of strong feeling, no matter whether real or simulated. If real, it disturbs the level of conversation and of manners; if simulated, so much the worse. In such an atmosphere emotion takes refuge in jest, and passion hides itself in scepticism of passion. We are not going to wear our hearts upon our sleeves; rather than that, we shall pretend to have no heart at all; and if perchance a bit of it should peep out, we shall hide it again as quickly as possible, and laugh at the exposure as a good joke. If a lady in a ball-room finds that her back-hair has escaped from the ligaments with which it is held together, the best she can do is to laugh; we may laugh at ourselves also, when we give way to feeling, and pass it off as a momentary weakness.'

Now there is, as I said, beauty and truth in this description; though beauty of the autumnal class, and truth which brings tears near to the eyes. To live and mix with one's fellow-men and women, and feel that our life is bound to be a sort of tacit masquerade; that the very last character in which we dare appear is that which is truthfully our own; that, whatever depths lie deep down below the

surface, it is the beaded, frothy surface alone which is ever to be seen by the companions of our unbusiness hours. All this, I say, is sad:—this need to laugh with the lips, while all the time a low moan lurks muffled in the heart; to have to talk gaily while

'All within is cheerless, dark, and cold,
When all earth's joys seem mockery and madness
And life more tedious than a tale twice told,'

—this knowing that, if he become (as who must not, sooner or later?) that

'Poor sequestered stag,
That from the hunter's aim hath taken a hurt,'

and so is now fain to languish instead of moving with gay springy step,—that then he must drop out of the care and thought of the company that would take no denial from him, a little agone, but now,

'A careless herd,
Full of the pasture, jump along by him,
And never stay to greet him.'

'Tis just the fashion,' no doubt. But it is a cruelly sad one. Only even amid this state of things, in which reality is contrary to good taste, and emotion intolerable, and seriousness forbidden, yet now and then (if but as a change of sensation,) a sentence or two is permissible, if it come from an outsider, an intruder into the group, whose intrusion is guarded from any excess of prolixity. So that I may venture upon one earnest word, being a brief word, upon this theme of the maxim which should govern the choice of our recreation.

Every one, then, should be careful that his recreation be, in the first place, perfectly innocent, and bringing harm, direct or indirect, to none; next that it be not mere trifling and childish folly (done, that is, *for the sake of* trifling and in an idle spirit—I do not here speak of a light act with a healthy end). For there will be bubbles on the deep stream, but we do not grudge occasional gaiety to permanent depth. There must be the depth, however, to justify the lightness. Not mere idleness of life, then, but a service of God, if not in itself, yet by fitting us for our direct

service. This, rightly regarded, is not to sadden, but to ennoble life. Is it not a glorious thing that not only our work, but our recreation, may, for its ultimate goal, propose to itself so great an end? Therefore should there be a fitness and a dignity even in the unbending of our lighter hours; and wise Jeremy's advice to the scholar is one that all may lay to heart for its beauty and wisdom:

'Spend not your time in that which profits not; for your labour and your health, your time and your studies are very valuable; and it is a thousand pities to see a diligent and a hopeful person spend himself in gathering cockle-shells and little pebbles, in telling sands upon the shores, and making garlands of useless daisies.'

But now I shall not call the work of the scientific collector a trifling amusement, if it be a recreation from graver work. Why, I might have devoted a whole poppy-paper to a day of hunting after, say, beetles, butterflies, rare plants or ferns. What more delightful, to the adept in such things, than the starting forth, armed with net, and many boxes, or with portentous tin case, —an exaggerated sandwich-box—for a day's hunting after new specimens? There is for one thing the enjoyableness which belongs alike to all poppy-days—that of the free rush out into a wider air of liberty, after the confinement of close work; also of the change of employment, routine, scenery. There is, for another, the real relish and keen appetite which comes from the fact of being a collector, a relish common to all collectors—of securing specimens which you possessed not before, pinning hereafter neatly set-out coleoptera, or lepidoptera, into some place long tantalizingly vacant;—labelling the splashed or speckled or blue or snowy eggs, and gumming them on to their card;—placing the pink-lined prickly shell into its bed of white wool;—sticking the postage-stamp into the album and just filling the gap in the page;—fastening in the large-leaved portfolio the '*Clara perfoliata*,' or

the '*Hymenophyllum Tunbridgeense*,' or the '*Osmunda regalis*,'—storing by any specimen which has been really self-found, and henceforth is fragrant with delightful associations of the when and the where and the how.

Then there are so many concomitant delights: blowing air; fresh sky; banks of flowers—blue-bell, and small scabious, and yellow toad flax, and ox-eye daisies, and speckled grasses of all silky feather; why the scramble up the cliffs, sloping and swarded, between Dover and Sandgate would be of itself delightful, quite independently of the fact that in them you find, laid out for your enjoying, a wide—what shall I call it?—'entomological garden.' And the blue sea faints and dies, with calming murmur, on the yellow sands below: and the sparkles glint over it as it brims, grey and hazy, up to the horizon; and the flowers scent the warm air, and the bees penetrate the flowers, and the butterflies flaunt by, all the while you are burrowing or scratching under the roots, and about the stones, after some poor—bug—the unlearned contemptuously call it—but, to you, rare and nearly unique 'specimen.'

But I have never myself joined in this chase: my craving was, once upon a time, for even every kind of British fern; nor did I value these unless myself had found my specimen. So my hungry eye would perpetually rake the hedge-rows and banks in my walks; this, the sole disadvantage, for the mind and the eye, are taken away from the wider prospect. Most enjoyable the voyage of search, on being assured that such and such a coy absentee *was* certainly to be found (by those that could) in such or such a habitat. The anticipation all the way; the eagerness as the place is neared; the sifting and patient search; the child-bound of delight when success rewarded it! Tracing backwards and forwards the spongy marsh after '*Botrychium lunaria*,' calculating how to bridge that deep wide ditch upon the other side of which waved profuse masses of oak or beech fern,

and succeeding at last by sinking big stones until an insecure footing, delightful in its peril, was obtained;—then a sufficiency of fronds for drying, or (better) roots for planting, having been secured, the triumphant arrival at home, and the sympathising assemblage of heads, like minnows about a caddis-worm: all this was exhilarating; truly recreation.

Nay, even in the mild balmy summer nights, see me faring forth with an eager lepidopterist, towards Brighton Downs; stopping on the way at a chemist's to buy a nest of cunning wooden boxes, fitting one within the other. A long uphill walk, stimulated by curiosity on my part, and by the appetite of the collector on his; and the scene of operations is reached. I am to learn, tyro as I am, something as to the process and excitement of 'sugaring.' Accordingly a halt is made at the first post, on (I believe) the racing-course; and this is well smeared with sugar, rum, treacle, and beer—or some such compound. So the next, and the next, on to some twenty or more. The darkness deepens; and now after a breathless pause, we revisit the first of our snares—the dark-lantern is turned full upon the sticky preparation: only a common moth or two fluttering about it, or gloating on it. We leave the filmy, gauzy things unmolested, and pass on to the next. A doubtful case here: still—if passed by his feelings might be hurt—well, a box is popped on him and he is transferred to his bed of pounded laurel-leaves and chloroform. The next: and then the next:—and here is a grand find! The excitement, if subdued, is intense; until he is secured, and safely housed. Then a blank time succeeds, and the sport flags; here is a fair catch or two presently; again, perhaps, a grand prize. I could not help whimsically conjecturing the suspicious bearing of some vigilant policeman, unversed in the magic of lepidopterism, if, attracted by our will-o'-the-wisp lantern, he should suddenly demand our occupation. Also I fancied the scrutiny and speculations of the uninitiated

if they should be, moth-like, attracted by our sugared posts next day. The fair primrose glove innocently applied, the injured remark, 'Why, it's sticky!' as the result of the experiment:—fancy depicted it all.

But the moths became coy, and the collector appeased, and, with a fair bag, or box, we descended the heights to sarcasm and supper.

Well, perhaps I have set down these ending trifles to show that I did not mean to intimate that our recreations should be, in their subject-matter, ponderous. If the life be earnest, womanly or manly, why we can allow easily-stirred ripples to the top of the meadow that has a good deep bottom of grass; and froth to the full purpose-moved waters; and ('tis for the last time that I shall weary you with the simile) *poppies in the corn*.

There is exceeding beauty in that joyous life under which earnestness lies, but which retains the child-power of quick delight and ready enjoyment: that life, of which most can recall some instances, which

'Has a grace in being gay, which even mournful souls approve;

For the root of some grave earnest thought is understruck so rightly

[As to justify the foliage and the waving flowers above.'

But I should end. I will for a moment dwell upon one point which I did but mention, in my maxim for directing our choice of recreation; viz., *That it be perfectly innocent, and bringing harm, direct or indirect, to none*. I might (but I will not) bring in here certain reasons why, long time before I was ordained, I gave up, once and for ever, after a little searching thought, all visits to theatres. To an opera I have never been. I might (but I refrain) bring forward certain weighty suggestions concerning card-playing and going to races. Some of my readers may like to exercise their wits in puzzling out what might be these thoughts which are not here set down. Be it enough for me to quote a, with me, very favourite couplet from Wordsworth, as to the rule which

he ever kept in view in the lighter hours of life. It was as follows:—

‘Never to blend my pleasure or my sport
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.’

Most people can so far put two and two together as to make out my meaning, and couple my allusions, in inserting these lines in this paper. What a different thing society, what a different place the world, would be, if we established this for our rule, in cases of doubtful amusements (and there are many). Never to blend our pleasure or our recreation with sin or temptation of others. What said a kind wise heart, many years ago, concerning even a perfectly harmless matter, and one in which he had a perfect right to indulge? ‘It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby

thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak.’ And again: ‘If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.’

It is good to be merry and wise:—it is good, also, to be honest and true:—and the two need not be dissociated. But here I end. My poppies being now gathered, *may* (which I deprecate) bring (it is a poppy-virtue) recreative sleep to some. To other some, kinder-hearted, and not needing great things to give them pleasure, they may be a welcome suggestion of glad hours to come, glad hours also past, in the long ranks of the sad years: gay poppies pleasant to behold, laughing here and there about the useful corn.



IMPRESSIONS OF ONE TERM AT EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

BY AN EXPELLED UNDERGRADUATE.

'OH mihi præteritos referat nunc Jupiter annos!' howls the poet. But supposing that the jovial but viciously-disposed old cloud-compeller alluded to possessed both the power and the will to entertain for us mortals such a suggestion, is there any reasonable probability that we should live these *præteritos annos* over again with any more credit, or even with any less discredit to ourselves than is now the case? Would the pages of our past history be less blurred by the stains of puerile follies, less disgraced by the shameful blots of adult vices than we find them now to be?—now that maturer years have brought with them a ripper judgment, and calm retrospect brings its bitter heartache of remorse for golden opportunities irrevocably cast away; now that the teeth which in all the hot-headed fire of early youth and new-found freedom from restraint buried themselves so eagerly in the tempting ripe fruit have been brought up sharp with a click and a thrill of anguish against the inevitable stone concealed therein; in short, now that we have arrived at a common stand-point with the sapient son of Bathsheba, who having not conquered his passions, but drunk the cup of sensual indulgence to the very dregs, and gorged the cravings of youthful passion by excess, deliberately turns round upon the world which he has sucked dry, and assures mankind that everything sublunary is superlative vanity!

No, I do not for a moment believe that Solomon, for all the trite sayings of Ecclesiastes, would have in any material way altered his mode of life if he had had the chance to live it over again; neither do I believe that any of us would do so, unless, indeed, the King of gods and men would permit us to attach one condition to the bargain, and suffer us to recommence our race of life not only with all the same advantages of unsullied reputations,

undimmed energies, unblunted aspirations after good, but also *plus* the EXPERIENCE we now have: then there might be a chance of better things in a time of literal regeneration; but as matters now stand, the sentiment of the poet is but the merest, utterest claptrap. Well, but still, in common with Solomon, we may endeavour to make some use of this dearly-bought experience of our past lives to warn others over whom we may at any time gain any influence—we may assure them of our conviction, arrived at from personal experience, of the utter worthlessness of sensual enjoyment—of the hollowness of a life of pleasure—of the bitter disappointment and sickening satiety of those who give themselves up to it, but I am convinced with little chance of doing real good; for is it not notorious that men of dash and spirit will not be persuaded of the truth of anything upon the experience of others, but scattering our Ecclesiastes to the winds, will insist upon essaying it for themselves?

Thus did I moralize, *multa mecum volutans*, as I was spinning down the country in the 10.25 express from Didcot to the west, meditatively chewing the bitter end of reflection and the end of one of Hedderly's choicest Havannas. It was foreign to my nature thus to occupy myself in the train. I have often heard it said, 'Tell me who are a man's companions, and I will tell you what sort of fellow he is himself.' But I say, Tell me what a man does in an express train, and I will tell you what his tastes are! One man farms with all his might, drains fields, cuts down hedgerow timber, brings large waste tracts under cultivation by the steam-plough; another builds churches and schools, and preaches the Gospel to gaping yokels in the fields; another breeds cattle or horses; but most, I fancy, go across country. To a true fox-hunter there is something exhilarating in 'spotting' a

country from an express train; it is so delightfully easy to 'choose your place' and 'nick across' from the elevation of the embankment. But I was not in my normal state. I was going home from Oxford under a cloud, for a long, a very long vacation. In my pocket reposed (pardon me, ye bishops!) a 'letter dimissory' from the rector of my college to my father, containing a copy of the resolution arrived at that very morning by the secret and awful 'Star Chamber,' known to Exonians as the 'Common Room.' They had decided, with some spleen, but with unmistakable justice and wisdom, that from what they could discover of my disposition I was far more likely to set their ancient college practically on fire than metaphorically to ignite Father Thames with the flame of my intellectual brilliancy; in short, as I should neither do credit to them nor to the University, they had been compelled to remove my name from the books of the college, &c. &c. Thus had I terminated a university career of singular brevity, but not without the saccharine accompaniment supposed to belong by rights to all things remarkable for shortness, from a donkey's canter to a *nez retroussé*; and now, as I whirled through the air in that express train, with the memory of the gloomy visages of outraged Dons fresh in my mind, and the anticipation of immediately becoming confronted with the angry visage of an outraged governor, a rush of recollections chased one another through my brain, and like the shadows of huge clouds hurrying over a landscape, the prominent events of my first and last term at Oxford passed in review before me.

Exeter College, Oxford! Oh, how proudly had I ordered that honoured address to be engraved upon my cards but a few short months ago! As a chip from an old Devon block, the excellent institution of Walter de Stapledon the Good had naturally been selected to do duty as my intellectual nurse, and take the charge of me for my *alma mater*. I need not shrink from transcribing the name of this college in full, for I am

convinced that it would be impossible to hit upon an institution which is more perfect in all its departments than this one; it is good, in short, 'all round and down to the ground,' and the very decided and speedy *congé* which I myself received is but a proof of the watchfulness of its authorities over the conduct of those committed to their care. I would speak with respect of Walter de Stapledon, of Edmund Strafford, of Sir William Petre; I would speak and think with more than respect, nay, with a positively affectionate, tender gratitude, of the excellent Mrs. Shiels, who shuffled off this mortal coil in the year 1770, and thoughtfully provided in her last will and testament for the creature comforts of the undergraduates of Exeter College. There is, I am certain, no benefactor's name more frequently to be heard upon the lips of grateful students than hers. The most touching allusions to the 'fundamental' principles of her charity are usually to be heard between breakfast and the commencement of each day's work! I speak with respect and gratitude of the whole existing fraternity within those hallowed precincts—from the venerable chief, with his genial and insinuating manners, forcing upon each individual undergraduate the conviction that he alone had excited a warm interest in that paternal heart, down to the estimable but somewhat slippery mortal who acted Cerberus at the college gates, and who possessed as many pockets, gaping for half-sovereigns, as that king of curs rejoiced in mouths. What if the perquisites of this latter janitorial individual were enormous? what if the frequent contact between gold and the palm of his hand has produced in him the symptom '*crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit*'? he is but following out his line of life. Yes, I would speak with respect of them all; they all did their duty according to their lights, though, in some instances, these lights were by no means burning, shining luminaries; but to me they are now as mysterious beings of some pre-existing sphere, as those who once consti-

tuted my world and wielded an omnipotent influence over my destinies, but whom I have now left far, far behind, for am I not an expelled undergraduate? And now, as I reflect between the puffs of my cigar—the fragrance of Havannah soothes my brain, and stimulates and brightens up my introspective power—I ask myself point blank, but why am I an expelled undergraduate? Why am I, with every earthly prospect blighted, turning my unwilling back upon the University? What is the rock upon which the frail vessel of my life has stranded and become a total wreck? It is not upon a strange and unexpected reef—it is not upon a hitherto undiscovered coral island. No; like the ‘Carnatic’ steaming full speed upon her doom in a well-known chart-marked highway of the sea, so have I, with my eyes open and yet blind, crushed my feeble timbers, as ten thousand better men have done before me, upon the coral reef of ‘Pleasure,’ and because the danger-flag was disregarded, my ribs must bleach and whiten, with other wasted lives, upon those desert sands. Oh, ye rationalists! who tremble not to bring the maxims of political economy to bear upon the secret hidden councils of the Almighty, and to whom the existence of a little waste disproves the hand of Providence as guiding earthly issues;—what will ye say to waste so terrible as this—the waste of young, fresh lives; the blighting of so many buds so full of promise; the utter waste of all the anguish, love, and tenderness of a mother; the striving prayers and self-denial of a father? all are frustrated, wasted! And why? Because the natural appetites, the animal cravings and desires implanted in man by the God of nature, have been yielded to just one hair’s breadth beyond the standard of conventionality. Eudoxus, thou subtlest of philosophers! thou hast indeed more followers to thy school of thought than many true philanthropists; thy students number in their ranks specimens from all professions and all creeds—statesmen, bishops, doctors, lawyers, atheists,

rationalists, deists; ay, and those, too, who profess the very highest standard of the Christian morality, men who ostensibly are absorbed in aesthetics, and who speak of the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ as their code of moral law, even they are amongst thy followers; peradventure self-deceiving, half-resisting, much-repenting, but still they surely follow thee, and although from many different points of view, one and all arrive at the same conclusion that after all, the *summum bonum* of the human race is undoubtedly ἡδονή. I grant that with many there is a kind of sneaking mental reservation—that the indulgence of this or that passion shall not interfere with their chance in the world to come; but the amount of self-deception that must be resorted to in order to obliterate in the enjoyment of the *case* all thoughts of the *passé* does but add deceitfulness to vice. In passing, let me remark that in spite of Aristotle’s approbation of Eudoxus, an amusing critico-chemical experiment may be performed by bringing Logic to bear upon the philosopher: turning a ferret into a rat’s cage produces the same kind of result as may be gained by turning Aldrich loose upon Eudoxus.

Pardon the shop if I for a moment remark:

Quoth Eudoxus: ‘Pleasure not being praised, when it is confessedly one of the good things, proves it to be superior to all praise.’ (Like the Deity, or *summum bonum*.)

To him Aldrich, with the crucial test of syllogism:

‘ἡδονή is a good, but it is not praised;
Τάραβόν, because above praise, is not praised.’

Therefore ἡδονή is Τάραβόν.

And, lo! the rat is worried, and an undistributed middle term stultifies the proposition.

But as it would be hopeless to attempt to curb the adulation of pleasure with the assistance of so feeble and imbecile a weapon as logic, so neither do men need the theory of a bat-blind philosopher to encourage them to deify ἡδονή; in all this craving for self-indul-

gence is inborn, in most it is second nature; the pampering indulgent system which obtains in most nurseries, fosters and encourages the tendency, till it becomes part of the very being; and then, 'Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret.' Lord Macaulay was not far wrong when he used to say that mothers little realized how the impressions of earliest childhood left their mark upon the future life, which nothing afterwards entirely obliterated; he used to mourn over the growing spirit of religious persecution and intolerance, and declare that it greatly owed its origin to the well-known nursery rhyme—

'Old Daddy Longlegs won't say his prayers,
'Take him by the left leg and throw him down
the stairs.'

'Doubtless,' he would say, 'it is most reprehensible in the ancient macropedist to neglect his devotions, but I entirely deny your right to put him to physical pain or inconvenience in consequence of this omission.' Frisky matrons, do be assured, upon the word of a Macaulay, that there is no greater mistake in the world than passing over faults in your nursery with the ready excuse, 'Oh, he is only a child!' Depend upon it that, whilst you are sleeping, a certain enemy, notorious for his skill in tare-sowing, will be quietly painting impressions of embryo sin, in gorgeous rainbow colours, upon the easily-moulded soft wax of your little one's mind; and when you are anxious to hang the walls with holy pictures, there will not be one atom of unoccupied space. I was wrecked, then, as I said before, upon the rock of pleasure; from my earliest boyhood I had loved devotedly the horse and hound; my earliest play-fellow was a noble staghound, out 'at walk,' and the first toy that really gave me pleasure was a gun. As I grew up to manhood, all these likings strengthened into passion, and, like the snowball, gathered others to them as they rolled; and at length, a despiser of St. Anthony, joyous, lighthearted, living for the present, with every impulse of my mercurial temperament on tiptoe to meet half-way the inevitable temptations of an Oxford life, I was

launched out to sink or swim; and, need I add, I sank?

I think the first thing that made any deep impression upon my mind at Oxford was the system of compulsory attendance at daily chapel. It is not for me to venture a decision upon the expediency or non-expediency of this system in the main; it has, I believe, been now discontinued at several colleges, but I know not with what results: I can only give an opinion upon it from a freshman's point of view; and certainly the daily service at Exeter College was, a gloomy business indeed. I know nothing more likely to exert a deadening influence upon the sensitive plant of a lad's spiritual life than the daily repetition of what one could only term a miserable caricature upon the glorious service of our Liturgy. Oh! it was a piteous spectacle to look around upon the matutinal congregation in Exeter College chapel, just at that point in the service where, in places of true worship, there is supposed to be a grand choral burst of unanimous praise, in the words, 'O come, let us sing unto the Lord;' to look around, and to hear that beautiful 'Venite exultemus' antiphonally repeated, one verse in a drowsy snarl by the officiating priest, and the response in a listless, indifferent murmur, by half-dressed undergraduates, whilst the junior messenger quietly ticked off upon his list the absentees from this spiritual parade, was indeed enough, in these revolutionary days, when every parson is his own pope, and every layman his own church, to set one thinking that there must be something rotten in the system. Undoubtedly there was a good deal that was hindering in it to the souls of those who were exposed to its baneful influence; undoubtedly some weaker brethren, who were struggling to thrust their heads above the mire around them, and who were hoping to fit themselves one day for the sacred ministry, were sensitive enough to find a stumbling-block in the unbecoming levity with which the holy office of the priesthood was treated by at least one of those who ought to have known his duty better. Surely

there was a tiny smattering of truth in the doggerel that was, I believe, written by an ambitious scout's boy, and affixed to the tail of a certain rev. gentleman's horse, which was in waiting not a thousand miles from the Turl Street, to convey him to the meet of Lord Maclesfield's hounds! The trash ran thus:—

'Little
Shared in common with the leopard
A dislike of being rooted to one spot;
And when wanted in the church
He'd leave the service in the lurch,
With partridges or pheasants to be shot.
'But one day an objector, in the shape of the
sub-rector,
Demanded where the chaplain spent his time,
Says he, "Oh, fiddle faddle, in the stubble or
the saddle,
Whilst you can do my duty—ain't it prime?"

And, in point of fact, the respected working head of the college alluded to in this elegant poem as the 'Objector,' did nearly always undertake this duty of the rev. Nimrod; but on one memorable occasion the sleepy undergrads, at morning chapel waited in vain for either Nimrod or the sub-rector; a 'fast man,' possessed of more determination than principle, committed the ungentlemanly action of securely screwing up the outer 'oak' of the sub-rector's room whilst he peacefully slumbered within. The perpetrator of this outrage—whose name to this day has not transpired—was a feeble-minded but spiteful young man with a high notion of the *lex talionis*; the sub-rector had found it necessary to confine him to the college-gates for some offence, and he had thus revenged himself in kind; so effectually had he done his work, that the excellent sufferer from this practical jest was compelled to become a closer imitator of St. Paul than he ever bargained for, and descend from his window in a basket.

As to the dissipation of Oxford life, I am quite sure that fond mothers entertain a most exaggerated idea of the amount of actual vice in contact with which their darlings will be thrown at the University; they picture to themselves all the vices of a Rousseau, all the delirious passions of a younger Dumas, and they tremble for their fledglings; but it ought to be some

consolation to them to know, that, according to accurate statistical returns, there is less positive vice in the city of Oxford itself than in any other city in England of equal magnitude; and if young men will plunge into sin of a certain sort, it must be, not because temptation seeks them out, but because they seek it out resolutely, in the face of every kind of discouragement and at great personal risk to themselves.

The great sin of Oxford life consists in a really terrible exhibition of superlative selfishness, a pampering of, and pandering to, the body in a perfectly disgusting manner, and which still obtains largely in spite of the great increase of what Mr. Kingsley calls 'muscular Christianity.' If the men do cricket, boat, jump, ride, &c., more than they used to, they do it in a more self-indulgent manner; no walking up to cricket, no riding to cover; a drag and four for cricket, and a phaeton and pair to the meet are not even luxuries now-a-days. A correspondent in a recent number of the 'Times,' advocating the excessive devotion to athletic and field sports now in vogue, gives as one good result accruing from them, that 'the men do not go down to Jericho as they used to.' True; but why? Simply because 'Jericho's occupation's gone.' As an Oxonian, let me tell him that his argument is no argument at all, and I fancy that he would rub his eyes if he could see the pony carriages making erotic pilgrimages to Abingdon, Woodstock, and elsewhere; and if he could count the number of return tickets to London taken out in one term, 'Just to see my dentist, you know.'

'The self-denial of training' is all very well, but there is also a process called 'coming out of training,' and artificially working up the physique of a man into an unnatural state of development is a dangerous experiment. But, after all, the indolent High-Street-loafing is the worst of all, and is a fruitful source of future ruin. The lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life in their full and loathsome development, all owe their origin to this kind of degrading self-indulgence.

'Si jeunesse savait.' If young Oxonians only knew, only realised, how terribly they injure their physical powers for the rest of their natural lives, by the kind of luxurious, dawdling, indolent dissipation of what is called 'fast life'; if they could but have the scales removed from their eyes and could clearly perceive the semi-paralysis of mind, the positive stagnation of brain development, caused by nocturnal hours of smoking, tipping and Van John; the fearful extent to which the proper growth of their young brains was dwarfed and crippled by the malignant, cauterising effect of bringing the adult dissipation of old club-stagers to bear upon their green and unseasoned organisms! Ailing health for a lifetime is too frequently the price which is paid for the doubtful pleasure of a term or two of 'fast life' at Oxford. Again and again have I witnessed the results of this kind of life upon the tender brains of those who are almost schoolboys. One case especially recurs to my memory of a youth of great promise and wealth, the heir to an ancient baronetcy, who quite weakened his brain by a course of self-indulgent dissipation. On the particular occasion to which I refer, he had been up till 3 A.M., lured by the fatal fascination of 'unlimited loo,' backed up, of course, by unlimited cigars and brandy and water; he had not then learned the bitter lesson, which he has since taken home to his heart, that 'unlimited loo' is only an abbreviation for 'unlimited losing;' at 7 A.M. his scout entered his bedroom to rouse him up for chapel, and found him, still dressed, solemnly sitting upon his bed, dealing an imaginary pack of cards to an imaginary circle of gamblers; his pack consisted of his watch, his slippers, his prayer-book, and an old ace of spades. The experienced scout, in no wise disconcerted at the pitiable state of his master, quietly undressed him, got him between the sheets, and then slipped over to the 'Sub.' and took out an 'ayer' for him. On another occasion, a very estimable young fellow—who held the office of Bible clerk at

College, had been wasting the midnight oil at a card party; he had to make his appearance officially in the chapel on the following morning, and when the hour for morning chapel arrived, he was not inebriated, but simply mad, from unaccustomed brain tension; he was observed tripping up the chapel with unsteady gait and bloodshot eye, flapping the wings of his white surplice, and singing—

'Oh, that I had wings like a jolly, jolly duck!'

An iron grasp upon his shoulder, and a voice hissing in his ear, 'Mr. Willcox, sir, retire, sir, I command you, and come to me after chapel!' brought him to his senses, and sent him to the right-about-face, as if a cannon had gone off in his ear. Poor fellow! a severe brain fever taught him not to run off the rails again, and he now lives, a shattered wreck, and a living example of the poisonous influence of brandy and water and the Devil's pasteboards. I recollect a young man of remarkable shrewdness, a Hertford scholar and first-class man, reduced to temporary idiocy, in the same manner, by a few hours of eager gambling aided by the fumes of nicotine; he retired from the card-room tolerably early, and apparently perfectly sober; but it would seem that the sudden change into the night air was too much for him; for some lingerers returning late across the quadrangle discovered him encamped upon the gravel, under a rug, supported at the four corners by walking-sticks, and the aperture defended by a row of loaded soda-water bottles, apparently intended to represent Armstrong guns. Upon being reasoned with, he merely remarked, that he 'wash all right, shensible, shober, and sheriesous;' that he intended to 'take up hish abode' where they had found him, as the locality 'shuited hish health;' and so he wished them good evening. Pitiable, lamentable, but still as much the fault of the system as of the man. Of course I do not mean to affirm that it would be in the power of the authorities to put down absolutely such practices as long nights of smoking and cards;

but I think they might do something in advance of the mere feeble protest which now prevails, and only when these parties get noisy. In some things undergraduates are controlled beyond the veriest school-boys, and in others they have given to them more absolute liberty than is permitted by the colonel of any regiment in the service to his sub-alterns. And surely there is some excuse for this kind of treatment; for an Oxford undergraduate of 'fast' tastes, in his freshman's term, is the queerest mixture of man and boy; he has all the priggishness and conceit of a dandy Guardsman, and all the silly tricks of a schoolboy; the whole aim and object of his then existence appears to be to thwart, and irritate, and disobey the authorities in every conceivable way; and if remonstrated with, to retire at once behind the dignity of his 'manhood' (save the mark!). One estimable senior tutor, now married and done for, possessed a nervous organisation which caused him especially to shrink from contact with a dog; he most rigorously, therefore, enforced the rule as to the exclusion of these, his four-footed bugbears, from the quadrangle. What but the boyish desire to put this estimable man to confusion, after he had fined half the college for infringing the rule, could induce Mr. Dash to be seen in a prominent position at his window, petting a stuffed dog, admirably got up for the occasion, as the Rev. J. P. T. passed? A furious message, to 'remove that dog at once,' was obeyed by throwing the stuffed carcass into the quadrangle at his feet!

Is not the memory yet fresh within us of many a festive bump-supper, of many a jovial evening with the Adelphi Club? We had a little clique, the ἀδελφοὶ ἀδελφῶν, who would sit long after the other members of this bacchanalian society had departed with their friends, and then adjourn to the room of one or the other to finish up with punch and cards. Many a hearty song, not always quite as immaculate, I fear, as it might have been, would ring through the still night air from that room.

It was from this little clique of ours that a certain 'poem' emanated, which was certainly not remarkable either for the power and beauty of its language, the originality of its ideas, or the elevation of its sentiment; in fact, it was decidedly of 'la race mongrel,' doggrel to a degree, but when viewed through the rosy cloud which cast its halo round the careless hearts half stupefied by cigars and punch, it represented the queen of songs, and had more melody for us than the warbling of a Patti or a Christine Nilsson. It went to the tune of the 'British Grenadiers,' and was as follows:—

- 'I'll sing you a song of Oxford, and you'll all agree with me,
That we certainly take the shine out of the sister 'varsity.
There are many halls and colleges, but none that can compare
With the one whose walls surround us, our own old Exetare.
- 'Just watch our men on the river, or by the cover side,
There are none can pull more pluckily, and few more boldly ride:
For, take us as a body, there are none that can compare
With the men we see around us, the men of Exetare.
- 'They say we get few classes, and this we'll all allow;
But if we've few men in for glory, we've fewer still for plough:
We go for mediocrity, and no men can compare
With the slow and sure and steady men, the men of Exetare.
- 'Our Dons are not bad fellows, of this we're all agreed;
There's an uncommon smug amongst them, his name is Jimmy
But take them as you find them, and there are few that can compare
With the Dons who try to lecture us, the Dons of Exetare.
- 'And when in days hereafter we've left the 'varsity,
And a loving wife sits by us with children at her knee,
We'll sing of halls and colleges, but of none that could compare
With the toast I give you now, my boys, OUR OWN OLD EXETARE.'

The last line in each verse supplied the desideratum of jovial songs—a 'rattling chorus,' and many a throat has shouted itself hoarse with an energy worthy of a better cause; for were we not grasping at a shadow and thinking we held a reality?

Most of us, at any rate, have been effectually disenchanting since then.

I think a freshman gains his first real experience of Oxford life in the lecture-room: there it is, most probably, that he picks up, or is picked up by, those men who will be his associates, and who will form his 'set,' for good or for evil, during his stay at Oxford. It would be simply impertinent in me, an expelled undergraduate, to pronounce any definite judgment upon the general subject of college lecturers; I will therefore say nothing beyond an expression of the opinion that it is just as absurd to expect every college Don, who has by dint of severe application crammed his own cranium with the requisite amount of knowledge sufficient for a fellowship, to be able to impart to others the knowledge that he has acquired, as it is to expect every parson who has passed a good examination for his degree and for holy orders to be able to preach telling sermons. I believe I do not stand alone in the opinion that a good college lecturer is a *rara avis*. *in terris*, certainly he is the exception rather than the rule; not that we were worse off at Ex. Coll. in this respect than other colleges—on the contrary; but still it is an undoubted fact that when any man was really reading, either for the schools or for a class, his first act was to obtain permission to knock off all college lectures and 'put on a coach.' Of course the utter stupidity and boyish behaviour of the lectured has as much to do with rendering this mode of instruction farcical as the dullness and vapid ignorance of some of the lecturers. It is hard to shake off the impression upon first entering a college lecture-room that you have come upon a number of grown men acting a charade, one scene of which was the fourth form at Eton under tuition.

Well do I remember the intellectual encounter between one most erudite but humdrum professor and a well-meaning but rather foggy-brained youth, to whom the development of the biceps was of far more importance than the administration of Aldrich's patent food for brains. Logic was the lecture, the

connection between cause and effect the point at issue.

'You see, Mr. Mortlake,' quoth the learned Broase, in the dulcet tones for which he was remarkable—'you see that certain effects may reasonably be expected to follow certain causes. Now, for example, if the glass falls, Mr. Mortlake, it will probably—'

'Break,' growls Mortlake.

'Oh, no, Mr. Mortlake, how dull you are, to be sure; do, pray, pay more attention. I meant "rain." Now follow me again, I beg, in another proposition of the kind. Brandy, Mr. Mortlake—brandy is an intoxicating fluid, and therefore it ought to be—'

'Drunk, with a slight admixture of sugar and warm water to taste,' promptly replies Mortlake.

'Mr. Mortlake, sir, you are either impertinent or hopelessly dull, sir. I wished you to reply "avoided."'

During my brief experience of Exeter College occurred the celebrated 'Saint's day-lecture controversy,' which will still be in the recollection of many. It had been decided in the Olympus called the 'Common Room' that the ancient liberty of a saint's day's freedom from work was to be repealed, and lectures were announced for the following holy-day. Great was the revolutionary excitement, blood-thirsty was the meeting of sporting chartists at the 'Maidenhead,' round were the robins that were forthwith drawn up. A morning's lark with the merry harriers was in contemplation, and the unalienable rights of undergraduates were discussed with a fierce heat scarcely to be quenched even by Greenwood's excellent tap of 'bitter.' At length a suggestion was made by one youth wiser in his generation than those children of light who thought to rob us of our rights. The University Sermon! Why should we not all conceal the buckskin and the topboot beneath the decent exterior of a pair of sub-fusak continuations, and go *en masse* to the university sermon, thence to the harriers, Q. E. F.? No sooner suggested than put into execution. Empty were the lecture-rooms, full were the un-

dergraduates' benches at the university sermon. I have often wondered whether the holy but long-winded divine who on that particular saint's day had the honour to occupy the university pulpit, took the unusually large congregation as a special compliment to himself. I need scarcely inform those who are acquainted with the ferocity of the animal called Oxford Don, when fairly bearded, that the tumult which ensued was simply awful; an earthquake would be bagatelle to the *dénouement*, but the point was gained. It was proved to the satisfaction of the offended rulers in Olympus that the statute commanding attendance at the university sermon was a superior court to the one which forged the bye-laws of a private college, and to this day I believe it remaineth a *lex scripta*: 'No lectures until after the university sermon.' I blush to say that this was to most of us our first and last introduction to the undergraduates' gallery at St. Mary's.

I should far exceed the limits of this paper were I to narrate one quarter of my experiences of an Oxford lecture-room. The boyish tricks, the incorrigible idleness, the hopeless stupidity, the hacking and stammering, and other artificial means resorted to to lengthen out the sentences when the finger of the clock was drawing near to the hour of release, are they not all written in letters of fire upon the memory of every unfortunate college tutor?

Some of the construals and replies given in Oxford lecture-rooms merit for their authors the application of a birch rod far more than the wilful false quantities of the lower school at Eton. Many will recollect the case of a careless, empty-headed young fellow who thus acquitted himself in a Horace lecture of the Rev. Mr. Dozer. He was desired to commence construing at the first satire of the inimitable Quintus Horatius Flaccus—

'Qui fit, Mæcenæ, ut nemo, quam sibi sortem
Sui ratio dederit, seu fors objeceret, illa
Contentus vivat?'

Evidently he had never set eyes upon the passage before, and pos-

sessed not the faintest notion of its meaning, but at it he went doggedly—'*Qui fit Mæcenæ,—who made Mæcenæ? ut nemo,—what, nobody? quam sibi sortem,—what sort of a fellow was he, then?*'

Doubtless, also, the advocates of the modern system of education, abolishing the dead languages, will look with gloomy satisfaction upon the following murder of a language already defunct, and the postponement of whose burial is in their eyes a national scandal. The excellent Dozer was again the victim: he had desired a future ruler of the country to render into English—

'Vere novo, gelidus canis quum montibus
humor

Liquitur.'—Georg., Lib. I., 43.

Blandly the 'Latinicide' began: '*Vere novo*, I know well; *quum*, when; *gelidus canis*, the cold dog; *liquitur*, is left; *montibus*, on the mountains; *humor*, for a joke.' In those days Mr. Dozer, though deservedly popular for his affability and real kindness of heart, was not considered quite the Solon of lecturers: there was a certain wicked epigram extant, which defined with tolerable accuracy the estimation in which his critical scholarship was held—it was as follows:

'An Exeter tutor, named Dozer,
Whenever he met with a poser,
Exclaimed quite abrupt,
Why the passage is corrupt!
Pass on to the next line, said Dozer.'

Of course one of the 'incidents' of my freshman's term was 'going in for smalls.' I had just managed to scrape through the preliminary examination in Hall, 'by the skin of my teeth,' and so was obliged to go into the schools; but no *testamur*—as the little shilling slips of blue paper certifying your success are called—fell to my lot. I am quite sure that the dear ladies have no idea how objectionable, even to the susceptible heart of an undergraduate, is the sight of their sweet faces during the *viva voce* examination. A little incident occurred to myself during this examination, which, if adopted as a precedent, might help to clear the schools of these delightful nuisances—unless, indeed, we are to believe the 'Satur-

'day Review;' and in that case it would but prove an additional inducement to the girl of the period. I was labouring heavily over some Homer construing, when the rustle of silk, and the indescribable little creaking of mysterious 'tournures' and 'paniers' just behind me, announced the arrival of some fair spectators of my martyrdom. My examiner, a kind-hearted man, who evidently had a keen relish for a practical joke, noticed the anxious and annoyed look which I cast over my shoulder in the direction of the fair intruders, and he shrewdly extemporised a plan for my relief, for he said directly, 'Thank you, Mr. Blanc; now turn, if you please, to the 443rd line of the 3rd book of the 'Iliad,' and commence to construe—

ἄνδ' ὅτε σε πρότερον Λακεδαιμόνιος ἐξ
ἑπαύωνη, κ. τ. λ.'

The scene which the poet is here describing, with a startling minuteness of detail, is a love-passage between the respondent, the Hon. Mrs. Menelaus, *née* Helen *belli teterima causa*, and the rascally young co-respondent, Mr. Paris, which, even when gilded and bejewelled by the poetry of Pope, is scarcely 'fit for publication;' but when slowly and stammeringly rendered into the baldest English by a trembling examinee, was enough to make Sir Cresswell Cresswell rest uneasily in his grave. The charm soon worked: after a little blushing and whispering, the fair occupants of the visitors' benches took flight like a flock of startled pigeons, doubtless thinking what dreadful books those Classics were!

Any one could cram a paper with anecdotes of the schools, more or less well-known; with descriptions of ferocious examiners and trembling candidates; of first-classes jeopardised by Jowettian proselytes from Balliol, stumbling over the modicum of Bible knowledge required before a class examination can commence, and vowing, when upbraided for their ignorance, that they had been so occupied with the study of the Classics, that they had not even PURCHASED THAT WORK YET!—referring to the Bible. There are, more-

over, hundreds of 'good stories' of ridiculous mistakes made in examinations on the Bible; but as they invariably owe their pungency to the fact of putting that which is intrinsically sacred in a ridiculous light, I would not be the one to defile the pages of 'London Society,' for the sake of raising a laugh, with specimens of what is nothing else than ribald jesting on Divine revelation.

Time, type, and the patience of the readers of this magazine, would all fail me were I to tell of many a rattling run upon a 'mount' from Charley Symonds' stables; of Salter, and many a 'scratch-four;' of Filthy Luker, and many a bull-nosed 'farrier.' One anecdote of the latter individual, however, I must give; 'De mortuis nil nisi bonum.' Filthy is gone, and one filthier than he carrieth on the trade. Peace to his ashes; he really was a far nobler specimen of the human race than was usually believed: he was, moreover, a born wag, a marked example of uncultivated genius, a philologist by nature. I once heard him, when put to it, invent a word that would have done credit to our American cousins over the herring-pond. A celebrated prize beagle, 'Music,' had been stolen; as a matter of course, the bereaved owner bled him to the den of the 'Filthy' one to inquire for his favourite; but he did not go to work in the right way: he irritated, instead of soothed this genius of the canine race, by implying that he knew more about the loss of the dog than he cared to own. 'Sir,' said Luker, 'I know that I am a LOCAPASTIC man, sir, but I am not a thief.' 'A WHAT man, Luker?' quoth the astonished questioner. 'A LOCAPASTIC man, sir; a man, sir, who is in a LOW CAPACITY.' Many other words of like nature, when occasion offered, did this gutter-bred philosopher invent.

It was not my lot to mingle much with the *ton*, or to penetrate into the exclusive circle of Dons' family life. What's in a name? quoth 'We'lliams' the immortal. Answer, A good deal is in a name at Oxford, an' you would win a smile from a Don's daughter, or taste a Don's

champagne. I don't mean to say that 'Long' has the pull of 'Short,' though they are at the same college; or that 'Wynter' may show the cold shoulder to 'Sumner;' or that 'Day' may blase away with impunity at 'iKnight;' or that any practical advantage accrued to the two gentlemen who, by the strangest coincidence, happened to be the two Bible-clerks at Worcester College in the same year, viz., Messrs. Robinson and Crusoe;* but I do mean that a real patrician name, served up with a handle, the longer the better, is an irresistible bait to the heads of houses. In society, these honoured families are certainly keen sportsmen after 'Tufts,' and a plain 'Mister' rarely gets an invitation, except he chance to be a 'lion.' One wealthy young Christ Church 'Tuft' informed me that he had in his pocket invitations to dinner from six heads of houses for the same night—it was the night of the 'Oxford ball,' and each 'angling mamma' was anxious to parade him as of her party; but as I said before, I was neither a 'tuft' nor a 'lion,' and so never received an invitation to put my unhallowed legs beneath the hallowed mahogany. It would have saved me from my present position had I been dining with my friend the Christ Church 'tuft,' at the hospitable table of old Dr. Blinker, on that unlucky 5th of November that sealed my doom; perhaps I should not now have been speeding homewards with as fine a specimen of the academical *pulex irritans* in my ear, as the combined forces of the Exeter common-room could produce: 'Remember,

* *Vide* 'Oxford University Calendar,' 1863.

remember the 5th of November.' I certainly see no reason why the 5th of November EVER should be forgot. I was 'a freshman,' and as such, of course, in the thick of the 'town and gown,' on the 5th. Be it known, oh, ye uninitiated, that a 'town and gown' is made up of the component parts of 'town boy, very small, and inebriated freshman;' they alternately chase each other, and shout, whilst the policemen scatter the little boys, and the proctors remove the big boys. I am convinced that town and gown rows could be 'disestablished' by more judicious management. If, instead of, as is now the case, making them appear matters of moment by confining the men to college-gates, &c., the authorities would post a notice in the porter's lodge of each college and hall, to this effect: 'Senior men are requested to inform their friends among the freshmen, that the customary street brawling on November 5 is now considered neither manly nor gentlemanlike,' I cannot but think that it would be effectual, and thus publicly identifying it as a 'freshman's sport' would soon put a stop to it. But I was a freshman, and an unwarned freshman, and quite as capacious a fool as the other freshmen of my year, and so I joined the 'town and gown,' and (as I am in the confessional, I may as well make a clean breast of it) I was silly enough—nay, I should say, mad enough,—whilst being escorted home by the proctor, who happened to be of my own college, to slip into his sacred pocket an ignited Roman candle!

Hinc illæ lacrimæ!

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

BY A PERIPATETIC.

VICE-REGAL EXPERIENCES.*

THE Denisons are unquestionably an extremely remarkable family. After the Napiers, truly called sons

* 'Varieties of Vice-Regal Life.' By Sir William Denison, K.C.B. Two vols. Longmans,

of Zeruiah, there is hardly any similar band of brethren. One of them is the Speaker of the House of Commons, and although he has not attained to the perfection which characterised Lord Eversley, he

has well earned the peerage and pension looming in the future. Another brother was that kind-hearted and saintly Bishop of Salisbury who was so deeply endeared to his friends and to his diocese. A third is that hearty and able archdeacon who discharges his 'archidiaconal functions' with such mingled force and urbanity—St. George without the Drag on, as he has been affectionately and truly termed. Another brother is Sir William Denison, late Governor-General of the Australian colonies and Governor of Madras, who has just summed up his many official experiences by two of the most interesting and remarkable volumes which it has ever fallen to our good-fortune to peruse. Sir William's experiences have been of all sorts and sizes. He has been autocrat of the small and most singular community of Pitcairn's Island, the smallest of our possessions, and, while awaiting the appointment of Sir John Lawrence, was for a brief space of time Governor-General of India. His volumes are replete with vivid, accurate, and careful descriptions of colonial life, and in many respects will form a treasury of valuable opinions and information on colonial matters. Of his own home interior he gives us many glimpses, and it is impossible not to feel the deepest interest in himself and his family, and earnestly to hope that his return home, after twenty years' hard work, may be attended with all blessings and benefits.

Sir William was a Captain of Engineers of some years' standing, when he received, in 1846, his first appointment as Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land from Mr. Gladstone. He had, in those days to go out in a trading-vessel, carrying with him as part of the cargo two thousand pounds' worth of furniture and goods. It seems that our Government is niggardly in respect to outfit; and, indeed, niggardliness is fast becoming a governmental characteristic. During his long colonial career he always expresses his opinions with straightforward simplicity; and though they are not

always popular ones, we think that they invariably rest upon substantial grounds. He evidently leans strongly to the opinion that our modern parliamentary institutions are not the best political training for growing colonies. He gives an unfavourable view of the convict population. The chief good is done by Wesleyans; and though one of the staunchest of churchmen, he thinks that their method and organisation might very profitably be imitated. He thinks that the Church ought to employ a large number of non-commissioned officers. We have a vivid account of the social revolution effected by the gold-diggings. It seems to have visited the Church dignitaries with peculiar severity. The bishop had to paddle himself to and from his yacht, and the archdeacon had to lay the cloth, while his wife cooked the dinner. He speaks most unfavourably of the mass of people who rushed off to the gold diggings. Five hundred a year was the rent of two rooms; and people sent their clothes five hundred miles to the laundress, finding that it came cheaper. Here is a significant sentence, if we are right in our interpretation of the name: 'My correspondence with G—— has not led me to take a very hopeful view of the Church of England, or of the permanence of its connection with the State. The Church, in its more correct view of the term, will probably derive a benefit from the disconnection. I should not despair of its absorbing again those who have been driven from its bosom by mere questions of Church government.' When his time in Van Diemen's Land was over, he was transferred by the Duke of Newcastle to the government of New South Wales. Life at Sydney is placed in a very pleasant aspect, and for Sir William it certainly possessed the happiest auspices. When here he visited Norfolk Island. Here the descendants of the mutineers of the 'Bounty' had been removed. Here the Maine Liquor Law was established under rather peculiar circumstances, 'as I found that a keg of whisky had been purchased from an American whaler, of which many

had partaken so freely as to be very unwell, the captain having, for the interest of sobriety, I suppose, abstracted half the whisky, and filled up the keg with water.' The ladies of this happy race have also the free enjoyment of the suffrage. Probably Mr. Mill and Mr. Fawcett may preach an exodus into this political Arcadia. Many of the letters are to most distinguished men, on subjects of the deepest importance. Those to Lord Canning will interest the politician. Those to Sir Roderick Murchison will interest the philosopher. Sir William denounces as a false and mischievous theory the modern belief that colonies are useless encumbrances. He cannot help giving us some amusing pictures of the ridiculous colonial legislators—one member complained that the Colonial Secretary was making faces at him—and of the absurd deadlock to which legislation was occasionally brought. Then came a sudden removal to Madras: a gratifying appointment; but it was hard lines that he could not revisit England. 'Our packing,' he writes to his brother, 'will be formidable, in books especially; I fancy but few governors move about the world with a library of two thousand volumes. I know nothing positive as to my salary: people consider that it will be large enough to enable me to lay by something for our children. I hope it may; but I have confidence that God will look after my children as He has after me; and that, should I not be able to leave them what may be thought a sufficiency of worldly wealth, this want—if it be a want in His sight—will be made good to them by Him, as it may seem to Him best.' It is such touches that give to the volumes a deep personal interest, and where we are enabled to see the *dramatis personæ*, as if of an enacted tale.

In the next volume we get to India, and pass through a long series of Oriental scenes and pictures. Then came the grief, so common in Anglo-Indian life, of parting with so many children who had to go to England. Soon we come to some significant entries: 'Lord Canning spoke highly to me of Sir Robert

Napier, who was promoted for his services in the mutiny, and I had a long talk with Napier on the subject of the reorganisation of the army. The army certainly wants reorganisation, and we should be glad to see many of Sir William's wise suggestions carried out. We find instances of portentous mismanagement. Two hundred thousand pounds are spent on barracks on the top of a hill, where soldiers would not be of the slightest use. Sir William heartily approves of healthy barracks, but he suggests that they should be erected at a place where the soldier is wanted. This startling idea must have appeared to the Indian official mind a most daring and original conception. The following is an opinion which we heartily re-echo: 'I don't like the tone which the House of Commons is taking with reference to the colonies. I hold that the mother-country and the colony have a joint interest in maintaining the connection; and that the cost of defending the colony against attacks from without should be shared equally between the two.' He gives a remarkable corroboration to Sir Bartle Frere's interesting essay on India missions, in the new volume, 'The Church and the Age.' 'Very ignorant these poor creatures are, and stupid on most subjects; but they listen with evident pleasure, and a sort of surprise at being told of a God who loves and cares for them. They are not used to be loved or cared for, and this idea evidently finds its way to their hearts, and connects a happy feeling with their first notions of Christianity.' His opinion of the Indian in his raw state is very unfavourable: 'I cannot trust the Indian—I cannot get the truth out of him; and by leaning on him I should come to grief.' Very curious is the account of a colony of white Jews in India, who said that their ancestors emigrated from Jerusalem before the crucifixion of the Lord. Sir William takes a keen interest in the discussion of scientific questions, and has much keen criticism on the opinions of Darwin and Huxley. The native Indian courts are well defined as a mixture of

pomp and absurdity, of finery and filth. The following are references to familiar English names which crop out unexpectedly in the midst of Indian matters—

(1.) 'My dear Sir Roderick [Murchison]—Many thanks for your letter: it was a lucky day, to be marked with a white stone, when I first commenced my correspondence with you. I am glad you find something in my letters worth notice, for I feel sometimes as if I were exchanging "green backs" for gold. Your account of the doings of the Duke of Northumberland is very interesting: it is very pleasant to see a man make use of his wealth in the way the Duke is doing: no one grudges him one sixpence of an income which is spent in such a manner. Your "Lord and Pearl of Princes" must be rightly named, if he has the varied qualifications enumerated by you. You may take my word for it, however, that he is a very rare pearl, and you might dredge in vain throughout India for an oyster which would turn out such an article.'

(2.) 'I went yesterday to pay a visit to a rich Hindoo, the owner of house property in Calcutta. He lived in the centre of the native town, and the access to his house was through the filthiest of filthy lanes. In the courtyard were cages for birds, of which there were many of great value: the owner had been in correspondence with the late Lord Derby, and had got specimens from all parts of the world [1863].'

(3.) 'Mr. Chaplin and Sir Frederick Johnstone made their appearance on Thursday at a ball we gave. They are coming to stay with me while they remain at Madras, which will be only for a few days, as they move on to Calcutta by the next P. and O. steamer. Mr. Chaplin wants to kill an elephant; however, I am afraid he will not have an opportunity unless he calls in at Ceylon. Several men take advantage of the steamer, and run out here in the cool season, for a month's shooting. Sir Victor Brooks, an Irish baronet, made a very large bag last year, including elephants, tigers, &c. These latter, in some parts of the country, become a regular nuisance, carrying off

cattle and occasionally men. Last year a reward of 50*l.* was offered for one in Mysore, which had killed upwards of fifty people.'

On the lamented death of Lord Elgin, Sir William went up to Calcutta, and was Governor-General for some six weeks until Sir John Lawrence landed. It can hardly be said, perhaps, that Sir John Lawrence has in any degree extended by his rule as Viceroy the great fame which he antecedently enjoyed; indeed Lord Mayo seems a more popular Viceroy, and popularity is a large element in a Viceroy's usefulness. But we are now proceeding beyond the limits of the work. We trust that even this rapid sketch will have sufficed to give a view of these ample and remarkable volumes. We should say that much of the interest of the volumes depends on Lady Denison's diary, and her own letters and Sir William's to their relatives in England. This gives a unique character to the work. On the one hand we have constant reference to most important subjects of broad imperial interest; and, on the other hand, it has almost the interest of a story, from the constant recurrence of familiar names. We have no hesitation in expressing our conviction that Sir William has made a valuable and lasting addition to our national literature.

THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

In some important respects conversation is becoming one of the lost arts. The man who used 'to set the table in a roar' has entirely relinquished any idea of such an operation, and any attempt to revive it would be seriously resented by the table itself. Disguise the fact or explain the fact as you may, intellectual conversation is almost the hardest thing to be found under the sun. There is now no Tory Johnstone or Radical Parr, the latest traditions of whose talking powers are handed about in drawing-room or club. A few *bon-mots*, a few good stories are handed about and occasionally get into the papers; but they are not many; and it hardly seems to us that the quality is very

good. Journalising people, of the Crabb Robinson species, are doubtless storing them up, and the next generation will reap the benefit of them. I suppose it would be hardly *comme il faut* to tell the current stories now. But if you meet a celebrated man, or meet those who have met celebrated men, as a rule there is very little that you can carry away. Perhaps the illustrious being has talked energetically and given you a few incisive sayings, for which you are duly grateful. Perhaps, however, the 'great creature' has kept his lips hermetically sealed. You can only admire the dishevelled locks, on which no barber's hand has of late laid irreverent touch, and the constancy and vigour with which the cloud from the cutty pipe is exhaled. It was not so, at least, in my old college days. Then we talked on, crudely and enthusiastically enough, I dare say, but still we talked on to all hours reckless of any expenditure of energy and time. How we have sat after breakfast, hour upon hour, till the waning autumn daylight admonished us that we must go into Hall for dinner, and through the charmed hours of night until the light through the eastern window told us that we must be thinking of the early Latin prayers in our cathedral chapel! These were all things of the past, and we can only wonderingly look back on the dear irregularities of those olden days. A literary age—an age which cuts up its mind into shavings for the periodicals—is chargeable with much of the decay of conversational art. Men have found out that it is better to listen than to talk—that speech is indeed silvern, but that silence is indeed golden. What is the conversational use of a man, who will not talk his best, but reserves it for his next political or social paper in the 'Saturday Review'? He would much rather imbibe than expend, pump his friends than be pumped himself. In fact, a great deal of judicious pumping goes on in society. One of the best leader-writers who ever wrote in the 'Times' picked up his opinions from the talk of the clubs and 'well-informed circles.' Whenever a subject is ventilated with tolerable freedom

in a mixed company there is a great chance that you will find it used up in some leading article next morning, or in one of the weeklies. It rather impairs the freshness and freedom of talk to find it regularly utilised like so much sewage.

I remember an amiable French author writing a book on the 'Art of Pleasing in Conversation.' No one seems to care a rap now whether he pleases or not. On the contrary, there is a brood of men who pride themselves upon the art of being angular and unpleasant in their conversation. They have a look of serene satisfaction when they have the happy consciousness of having made themselves supremely disagreeable. When this has not degenerated into personal rudeness—and for personal rudeness a man ought always to be physically or morally kicked—this mental habit is not without a distinct value of its own. The combative, critical, cynical temper is the very pepper and salt of conversation, and on the whole ill-nature is perhaps the best substitute for wit. The fault of this order of mind is that it is eminently wanting in productiveness. It can destroy, but it cannot construct. It is analytical, not synthetic. It is eminently receptive, but gives out very little. Now and then it will give out some startling remark, just as if the light of a lantern were suddenly thrown on you, and it is not defective in a sardonic humour. Still the mental soil which cannot yield spontaneous growth, however manured and cultivated, remains hard, ungrateful soil still. For the best purposes of conversation this talk is very narrow and limited.

I am very far from agreeing with a man of misanthropic mind who considered that conversation was the bane of society. I limit that criticism to certain kinds of conversation. I am, indeed, a man of social mind. Just as Socrates declared that life was not worth living without cross-examination, so I feel that, as a human being, I must hold perpetual converse with humanity. Now our conversation, like many other departments of human life, is susceptible of being conducted with a certain amount of method. The Talk

of the Town so often frivolous and rapid, under certain conditions becomes replete with interest and instruction. The simple method is that you should become all things to all men. Try and be catholic and many-sided in views of life and society. Cultivate a habit of intellectual sympathy with every field of human activity. Never be astonished by any society or by any set of opinions that you may hear advanced in any society. Keep yourself fairly abreast with the special pursuits of men who are essentially men of a class. It so happens that on the subject of their favourite pursuits the most ignorant have their lore, and the dullest their acuteness. There is a great deal of froth to blow away from the surface, but then there are rich depths below.

For instance, I am exceedingly fond of the society of professional men. You may say that they 'talk "shop,"' and pedantry is identical with talking shop, whether the pedantry relates to books in general or only the making of a book for the Derby. There is something very anecdotic and gossip in the conversation of professedly literary people. The taste for literature, pure and simple, is perhaps on the decline, but there is a great deal of harmless Boswellism still lingering in the world. To such people it is a matter of the deepest historical moment that Charles Dickens has just started with his 'Edwin Drood,' and that Mr. Disraeli is on the eve of bringing out his 'Lothair.' We certainly will not say that they are wrong. They know all the gossip about the movements of different authors and the sale of their different editions; they will relate with awe whatever they have heard about Newman or Carlyle, Tennyson or Dickens; they exult in scarce books and rich bindings. It is the fault of many of those worthy people that they keep very completely in their groove. One literary man extremely well known and respected in his own particular walk assured me that he never read a single line about the American war during the whole time that it lasted. It is very different if you could get a talk with the editor of a leading magazine or with

the editor of a daily paper. The difficulty is that these men have little leisure. If now and then you can get an hour or two with them in their office you are in luck and had better make the best use of the opportunity. You will find it hard enough to get them to make another appointment, or, if they make an appointment, to keep it. Such men will give you the best attainable account of contemporary literary history. They are completely behind the scenes, can give you a history of some thirty or forty individuals who chiefly make up the literary and political press, and can shed a flood of light on all curious and well-conversed details.

This sort of people, however, rather take omniscience as their forte, and for the best Talk of the Town you must go to people who have specialities. Some people are full of the Academy. They could almost write you down the catalogue that will now be in our hands in a day or two. Others are utterly absorbed in the musical season. The subject of two rival opera houses once more is inexhaustible. They are full of the fact that Mr. Woods has entered the lists against the combined forces of Messrs. Gye and Mapleson. They will tell you the latest movements of the Marquis and Marquise de Caux. They have their stories of Pauline Lucca, and they are full of the great subject of Mdlle. Sessi's hair. People agreed that Mdlle. Sessi's voice and manner were exceedingly good, but somehow the Talk of the Town, taking the cue from Paris, ran very much on the subject of Mdlle. Sessi's fine and abundant hair. Then the musical talk easily runs into dramatic talk; but this travels into details where it is almost impossible for outsiders to follow. Actors certainly seem to keep up a raking fire of criticism upon each other. That wonderfully pretty actress has only a very poor brain; her fine face is never lit up with any genuine enthusiasm; this famous but obscene actor is now deaf and *passé*. Then the talk is a perpetual ring of changes on such names as Robertson, Byron, Sothorn, Bonicault. It is an example how closely the stage seeks to reflect the

day, that on the evening of the Oxford and Cambridge boat race brings out a little play on this subject, done in a skilful and gentlemanly way. One result of the system of plays running for hundreds of nights is that actors have all their days thrown on their hands. Some of them become very horsey men, or show other evil fruits of an ill-spent leisure; but some of them so lay out their time that they may probably rise to eminence in intellectual pursuits. The stage might be the means of an infinite amount of good if its tone were more elevated and its errors eliminated; some progress of improvement might be made, but that progress might be quickened. That man would do infinitely well who could reconcile the feud between morals and amusements. Among professional talkers I rather lean to the talk clerical. Mr. Jeafferson, in his laborious book on the clergy, might have given us a chapter on the subject. The parsons are rather ahead of the politicians. They are discussing keenly the separation of Church and State, and the town parsons don't seem to care much about it. They are looking forward with great interest to the raid upon the Ritualists. Popular preaching has very much gone out, and the taste for short sermons has spread from the people to the parsons. A most remarkable exception is the course of Lenten lectures delivered by that impassioned orator Mr. Liddon, who always draws together a concourse which even Mr. Gladstone might envy; and almost within a stone's throw of the church where they are given another large audience assembles to hear that fervid preacher, Stopford Brooke. It is very curious to go away from a clerical club to a legal club, say to one of the half-dozen which exist in the Temple. So, without naming any club, which might be unfair, suppose we go into some professedly atheistical company. This sort of company is not at all unfrequent, and is even to be met with at times among the parsons themselves. There can be little doubt that at the present time there is more undisguised formal materialism and unbelief among thinking people than

has been known within living memory, or a date beyond that. Materialism is, in point of fact, extremely fashionable now. One reason is that there is an immense deal of sympathy felt and expressed towards those opinions by those who believe with Robertson of Brighton, that men may possess an essential Christianity apart from historical Christianity. It must also be owned that while in a bygone age infidelity and immorality have been almost commensurate terms, the professors of free opinion, with the remarkable exception of Mr. Lecky, set forth a very high standard of moral conduct. There is hardly anything more remarkable in the Talk of the Town than the extreme readiness with which it will discuss subjects of semi-religious interest, especially in connection with the scientific controversy. There is not a journal that will not now say its say on subjects absolutely tabooed by the press a quarter of a century ago. The names of Huxley and Tyndall are constantly recurring in one direction; the names of Mr. Mill, of Mr. Spencer Herbert, of Mr. Bain, are constantly recurring in a parallel direction. It is astonishing how many people go to the secular services in St. George's Hall, and all seem to appreciate the powerful argumentative and oratorical ability evidenced by Professor Huxley. I do not know what may be the case in provincial districts, where persons are bucolic, and allow their minds pretty well to run into turnips; but in London, at least, it seems to me that they are perfectly well versed in all the controversies respecting the deeper questions of the day, while their own point of view is curiously misunderstood or misrepresented among scientific men.

In scientific talk you can never help picking up what is interesting and instructive. Medical talk is always good; the doctor can tell a good story, and tell it neatly. Doctors are always particularly skilful in their manipulation of each other's character and conduct. They have just had a *cause célèbre* to themselves in Dr. Williams v. the Duke and Duchess of Somerset. They have

certainly made common cause with their illustrious brother in the matter of this violent and most unjust libel. Dr. Williams's pamphlet, though the interest is so painful, has been extensively circulated. It so curiously happened that the Solicitor-General, despite the promptings of the junior counsel in the cause, by his way of stating the case caused the pamphlet to be republished broadcast over the country; and though there was an ample apology and retraction, the pamphlet became necessary. The other night the Solicitor-General was charged, in the House of Commons, with having been asleep during part of a debate in which he subsequently spoke. Perhaps here, too, he was nodding. The lawyers say that Sir John Coleridge might be Speaker of the House of Commons, if he so desired, on the threatened retirement of Mr. Denison, and he would make a good Speaker. It is to be said for the Attorney-General that though his legal claims would be hardly considered to extend beyond a County-Court judgeship, yet he is a man of great accomplishments, and has succeeded in obtaining the ear of the House. I have heard great complaints of Members of Parliament giving versions of their speeches at dinner-tables, before or after they have formally delivered them. This sort of thing ought to be put down. There seems to be a sad dearth of genius and ability in the House of Commons. Mr. Plunket bore himself worthily of what is perhaps the greatest oratorical name of the century; but it is remarkable how very few men, with the exception of Sir Roundell Palmer—who is earning the gratitude of the country by the wisdom and disinterestedness of his speeches—give the result of their independent thought and experience on the great questions before the country. One reason is that the House of Commons has more than ever the character of a plutocracy. Men vote straight with their party, not in accordance with their independent convictions. A plutocracy rarely possesses any large stock of independent convictions.

I do not, however, consider it

necessary to illustrate my theory of conversation with examples, which I appear to myself to be in some danger of doing. My notion is, that though you have not got men who are great conversationalists, yet by going to a number of men you may obtain a good deal of conversation. A prolonged argument with a man is a keen intellectual exertion, as much so as making a speech or writing an article, and you avoid this when you do your talk in detail. I cannot but think that there is generally a way of getting at a man's special point, if he sees that you are kindly, frank, and in earnest; and as you are able to number on your roll of friends men of most diverse characters and minds, so you may be able to gather up even from the talk of the town that material which, at a later time and under a changed form, becomes history and literature.

COUNT BISMARCK.*

A very remarkable biography of Count Bismarck has lately been translated by Mr. Kenneth Mackenzie, from the German. The book is an extraordinary one, and, we confess, puzzles us sorely. So extraordinary a familiarity with the details of a living statesman's life has perhaps never been manifested in literary history. Our first notion was that much of the work was pure invention. But we are bound to say that our suspicions have given way; and we see here an extremely careful and circumstantial account, collected from every possible channel of information, of the career of the great Prussian minister. Still we cannot understand how we come to be favoured with so many of Count Bismarck's private and confidential letters to his nearest relations as are here given. One of the letters, indeed, was purchased at a charitable bazaar; but we are not told where the others came from. The illustrations, numerous and picturesque enough, are often a little sensa-

* 'The Life of Bismarck, Private and Political.' By J. G. Heskiel. Translated and Edited by Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie. With upwards of one hundred illustrations. London: James Hogg and Son.

tional and a little absurd. The whole tone of the volume is one enthusiastic, indiscriminate paucy upon Bismarck. The book is in a high degree open to adverse criticism; but it is still one of the most extraordinary and life-like volumes of contemporary biography with which we are acquainted.

They certainly take great liberties with the characters of public men in Germany, greater even than is the case in England. We have stories of Bismarck's boery days as a student, of his duels and his love affairs. Even in 1864 we find him writing: 'I have just been for an hour in the Volksgarten, unfortunately not incognito, as I was seventeen years ago—stared at by all the world. This existence on the stage is very unpleasant when one wishes to drink a glass of beer in peace.' Here is an incident of early days: 'At another establishment Bismarck had a little adventure. He had just taken a seat, when a peculiarly offensive expression was used at the next table concerning a member of the Royal Family. Bismarck immediately rose to his full height, turned to the speaker, and thundered forth: "Out of the house! If you are not off when I have drunk this beer, I will break this glass on your head!" At this there ensued a fierce commotion, and threatening outcries resounded in all directions. Without the slightest notice Bismarck finished his draught, and then brought the glass down upon the offender's pate with such effect that the glass flew into fragments, and the man fell down, howling with anguish. There was a deep silence, during which Bismarck's voice was heard to say, in the quietest tone, as if nothing whatever had taken place, "Waiter, what is to pay for this broken glass?"'

But it must not be supposed that the boery element predominates. The author and editor have done their best to give us a clear account of the growth of Bismarck's mind and career; of his successful exertions to give solidarity to the Prussian throne; and of the patriotic German feeling that has been the basis of his aggrandisement of Prussia. We

trace his diplomatic career at Frankfort, where he thoroughly mastered the tortuous web of the diplomacy of the small states; at St. Petersburg; and at Paris, where he learned to match himself against the astuteness of Napoleon. The pacification of the Luxembourg was, in its way, as decisive as the battle of Sadowa. In such a career there are many striking scenes, none more so than his visit to Prince Metternich at his château of Johannisberg, on the Rhine. The book is a vivid record of a great career, in many varied aspects of political and social life, and sheds much light on German politics, perhaps just now the most important politics of Europe.

RECENT POETRY.

When we come to look at the poetry of the season, after Mr. Tennyson's 'Holy Grail' no work challenges a higher degree of attention than the writings of Mr. Morris. It is to the credit of Mr. Morris that, after his first volume of poems, which, with great promise, had only equivocal success, he preserved a dead silence for ten years. It almost seemed that nothing would induce him to break his silence; but now he has begun to publish poetry, it seems that nothing will induce him to leave off publishing poetry. To say the ungracious truth, we are beginning to weary of Mr. Morris. He has given us three or four big volumes of poetry, and there is no reason in the nature of things why he should not give us thirty or forty. He can never exhaust the stores of classic and romantic fables; and any classic or romantic story is susceptible of being presented according to Mr. Morris's mode of presentation. There is always sweetness, tenderness and humanity—'linked sweetness long drawn out'—and a faculty of presenting a series of distinct pictures before the mental eye; and his narrative babbles on with all the volubility of a Froissart or Monstrelet. His poems are, in fact, versified novelettes, very much after the fashion of the 'Decameron' or 'Pentameron'; and we doubt if, in any high sense of the

term, they can justly be entitled poetry. There is little concentration of thought, little energy of phrase, no delineation of character, no unity of action. We are not such Pharisees as to object to careless rhymes and verbal expletives; and we acknowledge that Mr. Morris leads us as unresisting captives with his beguiling verse. He leads us into the dreamland of fable, where we feel all the sweetness and lassitude of summer days, and yield up ourselves to pleasure and idleness. But still we think that true poetry ought to have something stirring and invigorating: that it ought to enable us to rally the moral energies, to leave us in some measure refreshed and ennobled. Now there is nothing of this sort about Mr. Morris's poems. They are essentially sensuous; sometimes they are even sensual. There is something extremely Pagan about the whole conception of them. There is no doubt that Mr. Morris has real genius. Many a choice passage might be adduced in proof of this assertion. But his tone is too low, his style is too diffuse, to admit of his being associated with our greater poets. We shall have four bulky volumes of the *Earthly Paradise*, infinitely bigger than the four volumes of Mr. Browning's *'Ring and the Book,'* not to mention the huge *'Life and Death of Jason,'* and a new edition of the earlier poems and translations of an Icelandic Saga. This is rather hard lines. It is time that Mr. Morris's friends should manfully endeavour to put him under some sort of literary restraint, and remind him that even in literary matters there is, or ought to be, some sort of Statute of Limitations.

To each of his poems Mr. Morris prefixes some sort of 'Argument,' after the fashion of Greek plays and modern poems imitative of the Greek. His titles are briefer and vaguer than those presented by the clear Hellenic mind. Thus he has an argument to the poem quaintly entitled *'The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon.'* 'This tale, which is set forth as a dream, tells of a churl's son who won a fair queen to his love, and afterwards lost her, and yet in the end was not deprived of her.' Then we have the

'Story of Accentius and Cydippe,' which Lord Lytton tells so well in the *'Lost Tales of Miletus,'* with the brief argument, 'A certain man coming to Delos, beheld a noble damsel there, and was smitten with the love of her, and made all things of no account but the winning of her, which at last he brought about in strange wise.' This is the kind of programme to which we are invited; but instead of sweeping, as the true poet should, the whole diapason of human life and passion, Mr. Morris is simply and entirely the poet of earthly love.

We have a most sincere kindness for Mrs. Hervey, and give a hearty welcome to her *'Gift for all Seasons.'** We do not feel precluded by the fact that some of the most brilliant of these poems have appeared in the pages of *'London Society,'* from endeavouring to do justice to the poems in their collected form. Mrs. Hervey will, however, forgive us for saying that we have seen higher efforts of her muse even than those which we find in these pages. She has a true touch of lyric genius in these poems, and evidences of a deep, generous nature, such as belongs to the true poet. Our regret is that, instead of a cluster of pearls, somewhat carelessly strung together, Mrs. Hervey has not concentrated her genius on some single poem of some extent and unity. Such poetic stories as *'Lear's Fool'* and *'A Strange Courtship'* indicate how truly she could give a poetic embodiment to the scenery and incidents of our trite modern life. Amid such a multitude of lyrical pieces it becomes extremely difficult and somewhat invidious to make a selection. We can truly say that any of our readers would do well to keep this charming volume at hand, and refresh mind and spirit by occasional recurrence to its pages. There is an affecting little poem on the *Prayer of Queen Caroline Matilda of Denmark*, murdered in her twenty-third year—one of the darkest episodes in modern history. The prayer, written by the captive queen on her prison window, was, 'Oh, keep me

* *'Our Legends and Lives. A Gift for all Seasons.'* By Eleonora Louisa Hervey. Trübner and Co.

innocent, make others great? Mrs. Hervey's last verse is:

'Great Heaven confounds thy prayer. Now
 thou dost see
 How God in love, not hate,
 Took back thy innocence in taking thee,
 And, taking, left thee great.'

Here is an exquisite little lyric, and with this we must positively hold our hand:

'TEARS.

'Would some kind angel give me tears—
 It seems a little thing,
 A child's first need—I would not ask
 The gems that crown a king.
 'The glad peace-bringers of the storm
 Are drops the sun smiles through;
 The healer of the parching rose
 Is but a bead of dew.
 Yet what am I, an atom sole
 In Heaven's creative plan,
 That I should ask the tenderest gift
 God ever gave to man?'

One or two more volumes of poems might well be noticed. 'Faith Græme and other Poems,'* by Eleanor Watson, show much good taste and good feeling; and a few of them indicate greater promise than their present performance. I notice this volume because it is typical of

* 'Faith Græme, and other Poems, Sacred and Miscellaneous.' By Eleanor Watson.

many similar volumes. It is very nice that ladies of refined mind and intellectual tastes should fill up their leisure by writing fairly printable poetry; but we think that, as a rule, they would do well to keep their poetry in the sacred retirement of their desks until the time comes when their matured judgment truly decides that they are worthy of publication. Something more than the record of simple, sincere, graceful feeling is requisite to constitute poetry.

We have much pleasure in expressing our conviction that Mr. Grant's work on the *Church Seasons*, in several respects is valuable and unique.* It performs a double or treble function. As a sacred Anthology it is an excellent one. It shows great poetical taste and an extraordinary amount of literary investigation. Mr. Grant has gone to far and profound sources; and, at the same time, his work is extremely rich in extracts drawn from the whole range of modern sacred song. The volume also contains much ecclesiastical information and sound literary criticism.

* 'The Church Seasons, Historically and Practically Illustrated,' By Alexander H. Grant, M.A.



AT THE ZOO.